

THE BOOK OF JOB
AND THE
SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM
OF SUFFERING
IT OFFERS

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TO
MY FATHER AND
MOTHER.

THE BOOK OF JOB

AND

THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF
SUFFERING IT OFFERS.

BY

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SECOND EDITION.



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FOREWORD



The study of the Book of Job is of great import. to all of us. The world has not outgrown the problems which confronted Job and his friends, nor the solution in which the afflicted man of Uz found rest. Conscious of this fact, I bring this work before the public in general, with the hope and prayer that it may add some comfort to perplexed souls, and lift the shades drawn over many hearts, and bring rest to those who wrestle with similar problems.

The cordial reception tendered my thesis) by the University Board of Examiners, has given me additional courage to put this book before the public at large. I herewith express my gratitude toward these gentlemen.*

I have, however, still another reason for sending forth my efforts on this great-life-theme. It is the sovereignty concept which the Book of Job so beautifully upholds. Irrespective of what prejudiced men like Froude may say about Calvinism, the Book of Job, as any unbiased scholar will admit, is a Book pre-eminently concerned with the Sovereignty of God. No stronger case can be given of this grand truth, than the record of Job bears. May the study of this book, therefore, stimulate this doctrine among us, and help us to adjust all our ways and experiences harmoniously and submissively to this supreme Will, to whom be glory and dominion, now and forever.

THE AUTHOR.

*) This Thesis was submitted to the Faculty of Temple University as part of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology. June 1913.

The author has omitted as far as practicable foreign terms, in order to allow this publication to serve as large a constituency as possible.

INTRODUCTION.

FIRST CHAPTER.

“ALL MEN’S BOOK”

“One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew;
such a noble Book; all men’s Book.”

Carlyle.

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FIRST CHAPTER.

“All Men’s Book.”

Not every Bible-Book lends itself so readily to every age, as does the Book of Job. Without knowledge of the historical background, much of the prophetic word would be hard to be understood. The historical setting is an eye-opener to many passages. Not so, however, with the Book of Job. Its meaning is unhampered and unimpeded by date, history or authorship. Its universality makes it so great. It finds a counterpart in many hearts and lives, in different ages and climates.

The Book of Job stands unique among the Bible Books, in uttering a message so profound and difficult—the problem of the suffering of the righteous and the sovereignty of God. To be sure, the theme is also mentioned in other sections of the Bible. Thus Psalms 37, 38 and 73, and Mal. 3:13, 4:6 broach it, and the so-called Deutero-Isaiah (40–66) treats it (cf. Cheyne-Job and Solomon, pp. 83-89; Peloubet, XXIX). But the Book of Job is wholly devoted to one theme. It stands like the sun, alone in its exalted sphere; others are secondary lights.

It is, therefore, of little consequence for our present purpose, to know when Job was written. It has been placed in many ages by scholars, yet it is not affected by the shifting process thru which it has passed. It is practically immaterial, whether it was written in the patriarchal age (Wm. Smith, p. 129; Froude, p. 211;

Peloubet, XXVIII); or, during the so-journ in Egypt, to console the afflicted Israelites (Van Gelderen, p. 11); or, penned by Moses (Cowles, p. 15); or, dating from Solomon's time (Delitzsch, Vol. I, p. 18; Renkema, p. 3); or, in the time intervening Isaiah and Jeremiah (Wright, p. 148); or, in the Persian period, to off-set traditional orthodoxy (J. M. P. Smith); or, in the Grecian age, as a protest against foreign thought (as if a Book like Job could be produced at any moment of national crisis) (Montefiore, p. 36). The Book is too full of life; the incidents too true to experience; the characters too well described to adjudge it a myth or idealized history. The age which Job attained; the sacrifice which he offered; the patriarchal offering which he brought; the names of the friends as well as of Uz; the lack of references to Israel's history; the omission of the law; all point toward an early date. Calvin has not committed himself, to any definite age, altho he does maintain that it is very old (Sermons, Vol. I, p. 24 ff.). I can, therefore, well concur with Morgan, who says: "There is every internal evidence that this is an ancient story, probably patriarchal" (p. 9).

The interest in the Book of Job is, consequently, general, because of its universality. It is not necessary to go to the land of Uz, to find its story enacted in the drama of life. Job is a type of that great mass who, even tho they adhere to their God, frequently see life's visions obscured thru manifold sufferings which they are called upon to endure. The forces of evil have not been totally overcome. Satan's power is still manifest in the world. The saying of Gemung is, indeed, true: "The Book of Job is adapted to reach every soul that suffers" (p. 5).

The meagre inferences and references to the time and authorship, have given the Book of Job an unusual place

of vital importance and of great value. Beyond racial ties and national boundaries, we find a common interest, a common experience—we find good men everywhere confronted with the question of the Book of Job, “why do the upright suffer?”. The experience of suffering may deepen its furrows upon the brow, but if properly borne, will eliminate the furrows of the heart. Suffering, if rightly adjusted in the divine economy, will mould character, soften temper, produce patience, kiss the rod that smites. Ever and anon, the world stands in need of enlightenment, such as the Book of Job offers. Hence, mankind will continue to look to this grand, old Book, not so much however, to ascertain its authorship and date, interesting as these may be, but rather to learn the consolations of the Holy Spirit speaking thru it. So long as sin and suffering hold a common place in man’s make up, so long will its perplexities and solutions, its sources and inspirations be greatly sought and highly valued by untold number. The propriety of Carlyle’s saying, in the above sense, cannot be disclaimed: “A noble Book; all men’s Book”.

SECOND CHAPTER.

The Enigma Of Life.

“But how can man be just with God?”
Job (9: 2a).

SECOND CHAPTER.

The Enigma of Life.

The Book of Job is not an abstract argument, a cold debate, a sentimental play, a Virgil's *Aeneid*, a Homer's *Iliad*, a Goethe's *Faust*, a Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Its greatest mission is not to display poetic beauty, or to create sublime literature, or to ostentate human genius. Its chief design is not to offset foreign philosophy, or to correct current views. Some of these things are evidently implied. Its chief purpose is more noble, more lofty. It is full of war, full of struggle, full of ethics, full of life. Divinity and humanity are its counterparts; holiness and sinfulness, its struggling phases; God and man, its chief subjects; a world governed and a world suffering, its profound questions.

Indeed, it is true what W. H. Green has said of the Book of Job: "It is occupied," he says, "with a profound and difficult theme, the mystery of divine providence in the sufferings of good men" (p. 1). The case of Job awakens our sympathy, opens our eyes, bridles our murmurs. "When we read what great trials Job endured," says Augustine, "it makes one shudder, it makes one quake, it makes one shrink" (No. 10). "Writing with his heart's blood" (as H. P. Smith says, p. 364), describes a certain phase of the situation; "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (as Job says, 19: 25), describes another phase.

The case of Job is not peculiar, in that it is rare. Many martyrs have outwardly endured perhaps more than Job, as the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Book of Martyrs clearly prove. It is peculiar, because Job is first chronologically; he paves the way; others have been animated by his example. Job has led faith thru many conflicts, triumphantly; he has assured faith of its victory. The smoke of battle dims his vision at times, to be sure; indeed, the clouds of doubt conceal the sun for a season and hope seems to wane, yet faith never fully yields. If it did, God would not be God. Mystery cannot conceal completely the deeper life. The subterranean stream flows, even tho invisible. It is bound to show itself in some of its tributaries. So faith pushes itself up out of the stream of life. It cannot be drowned, not anymore than a cork. It may disappear for a while, only, however, to reappear at last, more pure, washed by untold lashes of the waves of adversity.

Looking at the problem itself, it is noticeable that various scholars have come to almost a common expression of the same truth; whereas others have taken a total different standpoint. Some have been led into the secrets deeper than others, because they have drunk more fully of the waters of life and were animated with a purer motive and prompted by a spirit more religious.

Delitzsch has put it thus: "Why do afflictions upon afflictions befall the righteous? This is the question which is made the theme of the Book," (Vol. I. p. 1). Raymond has found many expressing his sentiments, which are embodied in these words: "The subject of the Book being, the mystery of God's providential government of men." Cheyne, following his destructive critical attitude, says: "The Book has no literary unity and cannot have had a purpose. . . The different parts of the Book, however, had their purpose, which must be sought

for by the exegesis unfettered by a priori theories. The first writer thought of righteous Israel's sufferings were an honor; the next writer simply gave expressions to conflicting thoughts of his time with no solution: the third magnified nature, and the fourth, sought to undo the work of his predecessors" (Ency. Bibl., Art. Job). Peake claims that the poet is concerned, "not with Israel, but with man; not with God's discipline of His people, but with the government of the world" (Problem of Suffering in the O. T., p. 83). Conant, refers to it, as the "mystery of God's providential government of men." "It is a question of our common humanity," says H. P. Smith, "does God, the Creator, deal with His creatures in any principle, that we can understand" (p. 364). Driver says: "It is a work of religious philosophy. . . . Why do the righteous suffer" (p. 409). Green has said: "The enigma is in contrast with what Job had to endure and what it might be expected would befall such a man as he" (p. 12). "It deals," says Moulton, "with the most universal of all topics, the mystery of suffering" (p. V). Noyes, puts it thus: "The special subject of this unique production is the ways of providence in regard to the distribution of good and evil in the world, in connection with the doctrine of a righteous retribution in the present life, such as seemed to be contained in the Jewish religion" (p. 6). Moorehead says: "The key-word is 'chastisement', the key-verse 34: 31, 32" (p. 140). Peloubet claims that the problem is "The mystery of sufferings in God's world, in its twofold aspect—its relation to God; and its relation to man" (XVIII).

These quotations could be largely augmented, if it were deemed profitable. With our present design, they would be of very little additional value. They have been quoted to show how scholars of various temperaments and belief have held more or less a unified opinion as to

the great aim of the Book of Job. Nearly all agree that the Book deals with a subject viewed from a two-fold aspect: the divine and the human. Even Cheyne, with his drastic views, says: "I would entitle (Job): 'The Book of the Trial of the Righteous Man and Of the Justification of God'," (Job and Solomon, p. 12).

Hence, from whatever angle we may be inducted into the Book, the facts are as clear as a cloudless noon-day sky, that we are confronted with the deep secrets of life, as found governed in the divine administration. Beautiful, as the poetry may be (and who can deny it); lofty, as the description of God's justice may be (and who can refute it); distinctly, as the characters are produced upon the scene (and who can disregard it—a calm Eli-phaz, a wise Bildad, a quick-tempered Zophar, a youthful Elihu, a suffering Job, not to mention others): it is more beautiful, more exalted, more lofty in its wrestling with the problems of relationship between God and man; righteousness and sin; sufferings and the divine administrations. It faces the problems frankly, views the possibilities carefully, solves the mysteries ultimately, as it deciphers the enigma of life.

SECTION II.

THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

SUFFERINGS AND THE SOVEREIGNTY
OF GOD.

THIRD CHAPTER.

Prosperity, Assault and Complaint.

Job 1:1-3:26.

“Virtue alone outbuilds the pyramids,
Her monuments shall last, when Egypt’s fall.”

Young.

THIRD CHAPTER.

Prosperity, Assault, Complaint.

(Job 1:1-3:26.)

The patriarch Job, hailing from a land other than Israel ever possessed, the land of Uz, enjoyed both internal and external, both natural and spiritual prosperity. He was a man of faith, devout and pious. He was the recipient of untold blessings—both physical and mental, both moral and spiritual, both domestic and secular. His steps were washed with butter, and the rocks poured him out rivers of oil (29:6). The divine benediction rested upon him, as God, himself, testifies (C. 1), as Eliphaz, his friend, asserts (C. 4), as Job, himself, recalls (C. 29). His noble character, his sweet disposition, his religious inclination, his remarkable judgment are the best any mortal could hope for, the purest one would venture to attain in this life.

Job's character and disposition are clearly defined. He was "perfect" and "upright"; one who "feared God and eschewed evil" (1:1); one, who was an example to his children (1:5); a possessor of unusual wealth (1:3); known for his hospitality and kindness (C. 4 and C. 29); respected by all (C. 29); a judge, whose decisions were much sought and whose verdicts remained unchallenged (C. 29); a wise counselor (C. 4; C. 29); endowed with rare intellectual ability (4:3a); one who assisted the weak and helpless, the fatherless and widows (C. 4,

(1: 29); a person with whom greatness and goodness went hand in hand (Froude, p. 241); in short, Job was known as the greatest of the Beney Kedem (sons of the East, 1: 3).

But earthly greatness is not eternal. The citadel will fall some day. "Riches have wings and grandeur is a dream." "Stones will wear away by continual dropping of water." "Virtue alone, can outbuild the pyramids." Night follows day, and darkness light. So Job, when at the zenith of his power, great in wealth, great in faith, great in honor, experiences what Southwell sings:

"Unmingled joys, here, no man befalls."

Job is assailed by a secret, invisible enemy. 'The Satan', had made his way to God, and accused Job of being religious for mercenary ends. Job, he asserted, was perfect and upright, because he was abundantly blessed. The malicious accusation opened the door for the archfiend to go on his destructive mission, his "sole delight".

Henceforth, tables turn in Job's life. 'The Satan' dares the best in man. He never wishes well. Having power, he fulfills his heart's desire. He fells Job perniciously. The man of wealth is reduced to penury; the man of influence, rebuked by all; the father of ten children, made fatherless. The Sabeans stole his oxen, while his sons were feasting, and slew his servants. Fire from heaven consumed the sheep, and those that cared for them. The Chaldeans took the camels by force, and slew their keepers. But the last messenger bore the saddest tidings: a mighty wind had been the medium of hurling his children into eternity (1:1-19).

Unconscious of the test to which he was put, unaware of the invisible foe behind him, unaided by the scene behind the screen, which we are able to see, Job takes his

loss in great faith. He bows in deep mourning before the heavy rod; he worships the God of heaven, and un-awares unmasks Satan as the prince of liars. Job reveals an inner light, unextinguishable by the most obnoxious foe. He utters that sublime passage, which has become classic, which, hundreds, encouraged by his example, have repeated with him: "Jehovah gave, Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah." And the comment rightly adds: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (1:20-22).

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The first trial had come and gone. Job stood firm as a rock. He stood the test well. His faith triumphed. He served God beyond personal goodness. The accuser was foiled. Satan was manifested as the great deceiver, the cursed foe of man, the terrible destroyer, the liar from the beginning in whom there is no truth.

Job's trials, however, are not yet passed. The interlude is brief. It is only after winning one battle that another stands ready to face him. 'The Satan' comes once more, as the sons of God present themselves before their great Sovereign, and seeks to destroy Job's faith by other means. God permits Satan to impair Job's health. Satan chose the lowest means in an attempt to shatter Job's faith. He afflicts him with a terrible disease, generally called "Elephantiasis" (cf. Driver, p. 413), and described by H. P. Smith as "leprosy in its most malignant form". It is so named, because those afflicted by it resemble the color and the limbs of the elephant (Peloubet, p. 10).

The graphic description of Job's illness, who can read without emotion! Stricken with boils from the sole of the foot to the crown of his head, "he took him a potsherd", we read, "to scrape himself therewith; and he sat among the ashes". "The ulcers were accompanied by an itching, so intolerable that a piece of potsherd was

taken to scrape the sores and the feculent discharge, 2:8. The form and countenance were so disfigured by the disease that the sufferer's friends could not recognize him, 2:12. The ulcers seized the whole body both without and inwardly, 19:20, making the breath fetid, and emitting a loathsome smell that drove every one from the sufferer's presence, 19:17, and made him seek refuge outside the village upon the heap of ashes, 2:8. The sores which bred worms, 7:5, alternately closed, having the appearance of clods of earth, and opened and ran, so that the body was alternately swollen and emaciated, 16:8. The patient was haunted with horrible dreams, 7:14, and unearthly terrors, 3:25, and harassed by a sensation of choking, 7:15, which made his nights restless and frightful, 7:4. as his incessant pains made his days weary," (cf. Peloubet, p. 10 and Davidson, Job).

When in such desperate straits, the agony was increased, thru the unbelief of his wife. O, those words she spoke: "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God, and die." She became Satan's accomplice, his fit tool. What a blow to Job! Those of his own household, his enemy! Face the situation alone, he must. In that awful loneliness, he became a type of Him, who had to tread the press alone. In those moments of darkness, when heaven seemed shut to him, and the dearest on earth either dead or against him, faith once more conquers. Job answers, beautifully, tho harassed by circumstances, repudiating his wife with these words: "What? shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And the comment puts it rather tenderly: "In all this, did not Job sin with his lips" (2:1-20).

The struggle grew, as the enmity increased, as the pain dug deeper. In the second trial, only the outward actions of Job are exonerated. He sinned not with his

“lips”. The Targum adds: “but in his thoughts, he already cherished sinful words” (cf. Delitzsch, Job, p. 73). Job was at least outwardly cleared. Satan can lay no charge against him. But, who would doubt the possibility of what the Targum adds? How mortal, the greatest of us, is! As to Job, he remained true, at least outwardly. Satan was again self-condemned. He has lost out against Job, so it would seem. Faith peers above temptation, conquers the greatest difficulty.

But, hush, speak not too loud. Satan, tho silenced so that he never appears again in person in this Book, uses other means to upset the tranquility of Job. He, being frustrated in his attempts and self-condemned by his false accusations against the servant of God, dares to ask God no more for special favors. Still, with the powers granted him he holds on like a lion to its prey, seeking to devour Job. This is revealed in the next stage.

The Friends and Job’s Complaint (2:10-3:26).

The calamity which befell the man of Uz, became widely known. Ill omens have swift feet. Three of his friends learn of his afflictions. They mutually agree to “come to bemoan him and to comfort him”. Eliphaz, the Temanite, Bildad, the Shuhite and Zophar, the Naamathite, are the friends whom he meets. Upon arriving, they find him in desperate straits. They hardly recognize him, since his features are so marred with the blighting disease. The blossom of health is gone. The hospitality which formerly was readable upon his countenance has disappeared. His princely attire has been doffed and sackcloth and ashes donned. Is it Job, the man of renown and piety? How is it possible! Only a few days hence, the greatest of the children of the East, and, now? behold, his humiliation, his dress, his sores, his loneliness!

His friends are well meaning. They take their place at a distance and humble themselves in ashes and rent their clothes, according to Oriental custom. Seven long days and seven dreary nights they look on in silent sympathy. Not a word is said. No mouth utters knowledge, "for they saw that his grief was great", (2:11-13). Had they no message with which to comfort their friend? or did they sit in silent meditation, trying to explain the situation? or are they timid to speak lest their speech should annoy the sufferer, as Ewald believed. Nay, not so. "Their feeling is overpowered by reflection, their sympathy by dismay. It is a pity, that they allow Job to utter the first word, which they might have prevented by some words of kindly solace; for, becoming first fully conscious of the difference between his present and former position from their conduct, he breaks forth with curses" (Delitzsch, Job, p. 75).

The presence of the friends, tho with good intent, worked harmfully. Instead of inspiring the suffering servant of God with hope, they simply add to his misery. "What a picture is there," says Froude. "What majestic tenderness! His wife had scoffed at his faith, bidding him leave God and die. . . . But his friends sprinkle dust towards heaven, and sit silently by him, and weep for him seven days and seven nights upon the ground. That is, they were true-hearted, truly loving, devout, religious men; and yet they, with their religion, were to become the instruments of the most poignant sufferings, the sharpest temptations, which he had to endure. So it was, and is, and will be—of such materials is this human life of ours composed" (p. 244).

Finally, Job breaks the death silence, as he breaks loose in poetical strains and utters his passionate lamentation, cursing the day when he was born. The poem, Cheyne describes as "an echo of the heart-beats of a

great poet and a great sufferer" (Job and Solomon, p. 64). It reminds one of a similar outburst of passion by the weeping prophet, Jeremiah (Jer. 20:14-18).

As we take up this third chapter, we must bear in mind, the disease which afflicted Job. Peloubet gives us an opinion on this matter, which other scholars have also entertained, which will aid to understand the weakening of Job. "The disease was held incurable, tho the patient might linger many years, and his hopelessness of recovery made him long for death" (p. 10).

Job opens with an awful curse. He hurls anathemas at the day when he was born. He curses this day, which is evidently his birth-day, which appears annually (cf. Delitzsch, Job, p. 77 of Vol. 1). The bitterness of his soul is deep. The man who was once commended for his great faith, is now commencing to totter, like a house beset by the storm, resting upon the sand. Satan's darts are working greater havoc than at any time hitherto. Job's conception of the sovereignty of God was wrong, as his other speeches clearly show. He felt God forsaken; this was his hardest thought to decipher. Life seems lost, if God leaves us to our lot. If Job was right, death were better than life. If God left us to our own destiny, nothing would cast sunshine upon our path again. We might as well be in the shades of darkness. Job's trouble was, that his affliction blighted the vision of God, and he would see no other vision. Job was too much preoccupied, too much self-centered (3:1-10).

In the second place, Job asks why his might not have been a still-birth (3:11-19). Then the flood of troubles which are now sweeping over him, would not have been in reach of him. He might have avoided all this. He might have evaded his present trials and afflictions, and enjoyed the sweetness of death. Life seems very small to him at present. Doubts harassed his poor soul, and

he is not aware that the outcome will bring him into a greater life with nobler aspirations. His horizon was so curtailed, that he feels and sees nothing worthy of life any more. The upper heavens had vanished for the time being. Nothing but a sweeping death seems to him to end all. He acts as one gone insane, as Calvin well says (Vol. I, p. 156). Even the great Egyptian rulers who had their memory carved in gigantic stones and pyramids, are no more in death, than the infant that never had a place of renown, or the laborer who passed the same way. Death was no respecter of persons. They all die, ruler, or babe or toiler. Death seems to him sweeter than life; the other world more desired than the present.

How full of agony is that drifting soul. Job seems nigh despair. His mighty faith is momentarily silent. To him, life is full of gloom. Death has at least an easing hope. Job was wrestling with unbelief and allows his feelings to conquer his faith.

It can hardly be believed that Job thought, while in these dark moments, that death ended all, tho many are inclined to take him thus (cl. Calvin, Vol. I, p. 156 ff). It would appear that Job seeing no hope dawn, since his disease was considered incurable, maintained that sooner or later the grim reaper would make an end of him as well as of all, as he rides thru the streets and visits every home, reaches every class, whether high or low, young or old, rich or poor. That Job believed in a blessed immortality, his utterances clearly prove, when he cries out: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at the last He will stand upon the earth; and after my skin hath been thus destroyed yet from my flesh shall I see God (19:26, marginal reading)." But now, the future lies obscure.

In the third place (3.20-26), the afflicted servant of God, fails to see why he should be permitted to live. Why

should life and light come to one who longs for the grave and desires death? Why should he continue to live since he is divinely hedged in, he, who sighs and roars, weeps and trembles, fears and is troubled? The whole scene manifests great distress. It shows the most bitter agony. What anxieties came over this troubled soul! Fortunately, Job was not permitted to remain in this condition. God leads him ultimately to Himself and Job finds rest. In the shadow of the Almighty, the most distressed spirit may find a haven of rest.

“God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore, will we not fear, tho the earth do change,
And tho the mountains be shaken into the heart of
the sea,
Tho the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Tho the mountains tremble with the swelling
thereof.” (Psalm 46:1-3.)

FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Great Debate Between Job and His Friends.

Sinfulness Versus Righteousness.

The First Cycle—God's Perfections.

(Job 4:1-14:22.)

- a. Eliphaz (4 and 5).
- b. Job (6 and 7).
- c. Bildad (8).
- d. Job (9 and 10).
- e. Zophar (11).
- f. Job (12—14).

“Is there not a warfare to man upon earth.”

Job (7:1a).

FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Great Debate Between Job and His Three Friends.

a. Eliphaz, The Temanite.

Job 4 and 5.

Starting with this chapter, efforts are set forth to decipher the mystery surrounding the suffering of Job, the perfect and upright man. The debate runs thru three cycles, increasing in warmth as it advances. The friends take turns to reply, to the great sufferer. Eliphaz opens each cycle, Bildad follows and Zophar closes it, for the friends (except in the last cycle where he does not appear). Job replies to each in turn, denying the charges of the friends made either by implication or in direct accusations. Chapter four and five deal with the opening address of Eliphaz.

In a gentle, polite, but at the same time heart piercing way, Eliphaz undertakes to reply to the man who had cursed the day of his birth. Very kindly he says: "If one assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?" Grieved or not grieved, Eliphaz believes that silence can no longer be adhered to. Job has said too much. He went too far. Perhaps Eliphaz surmised that Job was guilty of some heinous crime, for which he was now suffering. His theory was one, commonly adhered to in the Orient. Suffering was a sign of punishment, divinely inflicted, for certain atrocious sins. The speaker is rather

reserved in his expressions in this his first speech, but as the debate lingers, and Job is not silenced, he openly accuses Job of definite crimes (vide his last speech).

By way of contrast, Eliphaz lashes Job intentionally. See, the renown and fame, the ability and usefulness, the wealth and power the man of Uz once had! How success had crowned every effort of his! What a great role he played in the history of his time! He had instructed many; assisted the weak; raised the fallen and made firm the fallen knees (4:3,4). Thus far the address is more or less appreciative and laudatory. Henceforth, the tenor changes.

The second part of Eliphaz's discourse, relates Job's present condition. The great, powerful benefactor lies prostrated in adversity. "He saved others, himself he cannot save," is of application to him. But judging from past associations with Job, Eliphaz cannot give utterance to the thought which has been born in his mind, during the seven silent days of meditation. How dare he call Job's integrity in question? And yet, how to explain all this evil which had come upon Job? Personal experience taught him, that the innocent never perish and the upright are never cut off. It's the sinner who gets his deserts. As the lioness and her cubs whose teeth are broken, has lost her power, and faces starvation, so the wicked receive a terrible blow from the hand of a righteous God.

The question arises, whether this section, as it stands is an indirect impeachment of Job's integrity. Many have found the text difficult, and have, consequently, put either a part, or the whole section as a later classification (cf. Peake, in *Loco*). The *textus receptus* clearly indicts Job indirectly, by the mouth of Eliphaz (4:5-11).

The third section is the great piece of literature and treats of Eliphaz's authority and revelation. "The de-

scription of it ranks with the most wonderful triumphs of genius in the world's literature. This is displayed less in the delineation of the physical effects of terror than in the power with which the poet conveys a sense of vague and impalpable and the awe inspired by the wholly-felt, but dimly known. The revelation came stealthily to him, and fell on his ear in a whisper, with all the dread which gathers about the secret uttered in a tone which the listener alone can hear. Already his mind had been engaged in deep pondering, arising from visions, he had seen in the entranced sleep of the seer. As he meditates, he is suddenly seized with a panic, which causes all his limbs to tremble. Then a breath moves across his face, deepening his horror of the uncanny visitant. The nameless thing stands still, and seeking to know the worst, he strains his eyes to make out the figure before him. But he can see nothing, except that some form is there; all is dim and intangible, making his heart quail with the dread of the unknown. Then, as he lies helpless in the grip of his fear, he is conscious of a voice, which just breaks the awful stillness, and teaches him the lesson he now impresses upon Job'' (Peake, Job, p. 79, cl. verses 12—16).

The revelation contrasts the absolute purity and justice of God, with the insignificance and inferiority of man. If the higher order of beings, like angels (or saints) are charged with folly, how much more men who dwell in earthen tabernacles. The life of man is short; his days are few. The germ of decay is apparent and soon his earthly career terminates. Such is the universal destiny of man (4:17-21).

Finally, Eliphaz summons Job to rebuttal. He believes that no testimony of the saints, or angels as some believe (cl. Davidson, Job, p. 35), can supersede in authority that of his vision. And as to the wicked, their

doom is set; it cannot be averted. Troubles are as natural as it is for sparks to fly upwards. Suffering is innate. It comes from the hand of the Ruler of all things and is a part of the uniform law of God's government (cf. Cowles, p 38).

Having established the fact, that the divine providence guideth man's course, in sending to him his weal and woe, Eliphaz has a suggestion for Job. With these plain facts before him, he knows what course he would take if he were in Job's place. He would turn to God and trust in Him and commit to Him his cause, for He is great, boundless.

“Who doeth great things and unsearchable,
Marvellous things without number” (verses 5—9).

Not only is His power seen in nature, but especially in the hearts of men. God's providence is incontrovertible (5:8-16). In this powerful God, Job is admonished to seek rest.

The reins are drawn a little closer. The theme is getting more personal. The address now changes to the direct discourse, and the general principle of the cause of trouble, becomes of application to Job. Eliphaz considers the situation, as a personal appeal for Job to rest in the providence of God and to consider his afflictions as divine corrections, and his sufferings as inflicted by the Lord. This is to comfort Job. If Job will follow this course, he will be happy. He will be blessed, since the end will justify the means and the outcome will be most beneficial. All his ills will take wings; nature's windows will be opened and blessings will descend; he will die in a good old age.

The question may be here raised: Does Eliphaz hold to a kind providential correction, to which Job is subjected, or is it penal retribution? The case in question is not clear, as is seen by the diversity of opinion by

scholars of various schools. It may suffice to mention here that in the other speeches of Eliphaz the penal idea is uppermost.

It is evident that Eliphaz considers Job as side-tracked into the paths of evil. He, therefore, admonishes him to return to God. "Yet for all its sweet and soothing eloquence and promise of idyllic peace, the noble rhetoric rings hollow to Job's ear" (Peake, *Job*, p. 89).

FOURTH CHAPTER (Continued).

b. Job's Reply to Eliphaz, Chapters 6 and 7.

The arrows from Eliphaz's quiver, lodged deeply into Job's heart. The incoherent, convictionless address of Eliphaz, forced a renewed, passionate outburst from the mouth of Job. It was an impetus to call forth a deeper expression in a majestic and logical way, of an inward conflict (cf. Watson, p. 116).

The friend had viewed the situation externally; Job internally. The would-be counselor missed the mark and widened the breach; he tore the wound larger and caused the pain to increase.

Job's sorrow was too great for expression; too heavy to be weighed. He was conscious of the fact that God had sent all his troubles. God had attacked him, and selected him, against whom He was sending His irresistible forces. It was not so much his reverses and sorrow, the loss of loved ones and presence of pain that wrung his heart, altho these were keenly felt. The belief that God was against him, was his greatest pain. A moral problem confronted him, for which he could find no solution. He lays stress upon this point, since he had been adjudged by Eliphaz; he reiterates it, partly in answer to Eliphaz's charge, partly to excuse himself for his passionate outbursts. Eliphaz's address had been: "Soft buzzing slander; silky moths, that eat, An honest name."

Job appeals to the wild beasts to bear out his behavior. They bray or low, only when they are in need.

So Job, pressed by his pain gave birth to words which went beyond ordinary justification, and he fails to see why he might not give vent to his feeling. The animal world may do so, why not he? And as to the charge preferred against him by Eliphaz, mild as it may have been, Job considers it a great injustice. He has not been convinced of the error of his ways, and will not accept the insinuations of his friend.

Forgetting, as it were his line of argument and the address of Eliphaz, Job dashes headlong into a longing for a speedy end, tho he is confident that he has not shut his eyes to the truth. The clouds hang very low, darkness envelops his life; what a picture! Helpless, sick at heart as well as in the body, hoping as it were against hope, he wrestles with the moral problem, without discerning its issue. The severity of the friends, perhaps by gesture and facial expressions as well as by words, provoked these deeply impassioned utterances. But he has no motion to take his life into his own hands. On the contrary, his faith in God and his fear of God is marked, and there is no intent, even by "the pressing of unsparing pain to take into his own hands the ending of the torment, God bids him bear" (cf. Watson, p. 124), altho the loathsome disease is eating his life away and his powers are wasted (6: 8-13).

He now turns to assail his friends. Conscious of their good purpose and good wishes, of their long journey and good motives, he feels nevertheless that he is greatly wronged by them. Were they not his friends? Had they not believed his integrity for many years? Could they lay one great sin to his charge? Why this sudden change?

Their presence had simply thrown oil upon the troubled seas. He had not sought their aid. They came voluntary. He had not decreed that they should give

him wealth and possessions. He had not asked for their counsel. He had not requested them to redeem him.

This was a very mild reply to Eliphaz's charge, that sufferings were revelations of guilt (6: 14-23).

Furthermore, Job is willing to stand corrected, if the friends will use proper means and instruct him. But he wishes fair play; he will compromise with nothing. Justice shall have free course, as the river void of dams and obstructions. He begs for honesty. They may expect him doing, what he demands of them. Only in mutual honesty, justice and uprightness, can any cause advance. "The friends must allow for his condition, however. Job feels that the words pressed from him by pain, are no conclusive index of his true self. They are but 'words to the wind'; and to found a reproof on such indications is to him the extremity of heartlessness" (Genung, p. 169), (6: 24-30).

Job falls a victim once more to his conditions. In the seventh chapter, he plunges once more into that which is uppermost in his mind.

"Beginning another strophe," says Watson, "Job turns from his friends, from would-be wise assertions and innuendoes, to find, if he can, a philosophy of human life, then to reflect once more in sorrow on his state, and finally to wrestle in urgent entreaty with the Most High. The seventh chapter, in which we trace this line of thought, increases in pathos as it proceeds and rises to the climax of a most daring demand which is not blasphemous because it is entirely frank, profoundly earnest" (p. 130).

Job starts out with a reference to a general principle; namely that of universal suffering, "and so opens his heart to sympathize with all who suffer" (Genung, p. 171). But before long, he commences to soliloquize, and the general becomes particular, of which he is the repre-

sentative. He now remmnerates his sufferings, and describes with much feeling the warfare of man. Months he flounders in his grief, not knowing what may befall, the next moment. Uncertain as the Ocean waves, his life is tossed to and fro upon the sea of time, by the winds of divine providence. His days are passing by swiftly, without attaining to any new inspiration (7:1-6).

“Such a house broke!
So noble a master fallen! all gone! and not
One friend, to take his fortune by the arm,
And go along with him.”

(Shakespeare.)

In his deep distress, Job finally turns to God, knowing well that Eliphaz's statements contained some truth, besides feeling that God would be the only one to help him out of his troubles. The turning to God, he felt a duty, as well as a privilege. What he disliked was Eliphaz's conception of suffering. If all suffering is punitive, why then do the worst criminals escape so much of it? This Job could not entertain as a true conception of his case.

In his flight to God, Job prays to the Most High that his sufferings might be alleviated and his pains mitigated. The motive that prompts him, is not the one which Elihu later entertains we should hold. Job is swayed by the fleeting of his life (7:7-10).

Face to face with death, the patient Job is forced to reveal his inward strife. The approach of death has made many a person, hitherto like a sphinx, speak frankly and boldly. So Job, seeing his end near, relates with great honesty, his personal sentiments, compelled by an inner anguish. The thought of God haunts him. The thought that God had to hold him in check like a sea or sea-

monster, pains him. His determination to cast off his troubles and receive his sufferings stoically, simply augments his condition. He is haunted with dreams and visions most horrible; they terrify him; hence he prefers death to life (7: 11-15).

In that solemn hour, he disdains himself and longs for his end. He entreats to be left alone, i. e. that the heavy rod be raised. Then, as if struck by heavenly inspiration, suddenly a new light dawns. In a moment of unbiased contemplation, he considers man and his Maker, and for an instant, the greatness of God dawns upon him. He is amazed that God, so great and mighty, would consider him an individual and set His mind upon him. He pleads with this great God, to withdraw His heavy hand, and to forgive him, if he has sinned. His burden is too heavy to bear. He can not bear it much longer; he will soon fall under the heavy yoke; then his destiny is eternally shaped, for it is only here that change can effect his future destiny (7: 16-21).

The whole chapter shows how bewildered the sufferer is. His condition almost drives him insane. He did not rejoice in tribulations, for he did not as yet understand that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, probation; and probation, hope; and hope putteth not to shame, because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts, thru the Holy Ghost which was given unto us, as Paul says (Rom. 5: 3-6).

FOURTH CHAPTER (Continued).

c. Bildad's First Speech, Chap. 8.

Having, perhaps, anticipated that Job would have been silenced at the words of their Tertullus, but since, having realized that they were foiled in their expectation, Bildad, in behalf of the friends, takes his turn to meet this giant sufferer in debate. The speech is more stern, more severe, more direct than that of his colleague, Eliphaz. He assails the poor sufferer, and instead of speaking words of comfort, breaks the sore open anew. Without any eulogies to offer, as Eliphaz had done, he falls upon his former friend and accuses him of no small matter.

Bildad advances a doctrine, which was not obnoxious to Job, as long as it remained general; but when it became specific, Job could not go along. The doctrine of the absolute righteousness of God was as dear to Job as to Bildad. But when he comes to pierce the fatherly heart of Job, by implying that the children of the patriarch had been sent to eternity, as a punishment for their sins (see Renkema, p. 87), Job must take exception. Even if it were true, it was out of place to consider this question at this time. And Job himself, is considered as having done some gross sin, since he holds out to him the beacon of hope, if he will confess his wrong before the Almighty. If he follows this course, his place in the world will be even greater than hitherto.

In other words, Bildad believes Job and his children guilty before God; hence God has to punish them. Here was a direct accusation against the integrity of Job and his children, coming not from the mouth of an enemy, then it would not be so hard, but from the lips of one who purports to be a friend and a would-be sympathizer. It cuts to the quick, since it touched the veracity of Job, and pronounced him a pretender, a hypocrite.

Bildad's conception of suffering was, that all suffering was a divine displeasure. It showed that the sufferer had wronged the moral Governor of the universe, and therefore received his just retribution. If this theory holds, some of the most tried fall victim of an angry God, (8:1-17). Thank God, however, that this is not the case. Of the consummation of Christ's Kingdom, we read: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (A. V., Rev. 7:14).

In the second place, it is to be noticed that Bildad based his arguments upon tradition, in contradistinction of Eliphaz who based it upon revelation. Bildad admonishes the afflicted Job to look to the former generation for a solution of his trials. The idea that the aged possess knowledge and that the fathers were endowed with this gift of knowledge, he puts forth as an argument. This was quite common in Oriental times as Elihu himself confesses, at the opening of his discourses. "We are too young," thus it is that we hear Bildad speak; "we are but of yesterday; but those who lived to a good old age and served their generation well have left their testimony with us." From these sources Job may learn the truthfulness of Bildad's assertion, that the prosperity of the wicked is short-lived, and his doom cannot be averted.

This theory, or principle that history is a kind of patent medicine, able to cure all ills, and solve all mysteries, is in itself condemnatory. With all respect for the fathers who struggled like we do now, with all honor for their learning, it ever remains true that their judgment may be as much as ours, invalid (8: 8-10).

Now what are the saying of the ancients, these men of fame and renown, who claim our attention? Bildad quotes three proverbs: 1, that of the reed and rush (11-13); 2, that of the spider's web (14, 15); 3, that of the gourd (16-18) (cl. Peloubet, p. 33).

The whole section is replete with figures to display the prosperity becoming the righteous, and the destruction becoming the sinner. The attestation of such a doctrine is borne out by the laws of nature. As the reed (papyrus, margin, v. 11) will not grow to its full length outside of the mire, nor the rush (flag, perhaps the Egyptian weed grass) retain its vitality without water, so neither will the godless prosper without God. His confidence will be as a spider-web; his existence as a gourd, (cl. Jonah 4). God shall cut him off. He may grow for a season, but soon he shall be removed by irretrievable destruction, and nothing shall remain of him. Hence, his joy is only temporal. Others shall succeed him.

But, the perfect man, as Job had been called in the first chapter, will not be cast away forever. He shall have joy of heart and speak forth words of praise. The enemy shall be put to shame and his tent be removed (8: 11-22).

FOURTH CHAPTER (Continued).

d. Job's Third Speech—Reply to Bildad. Chapters 9 and 10.

Job in his reply to Bildad's address, which was more direct than that of Eliphaz, immediately takes up the first point, which he has raised. He unhesitatingly admits it to be so, that God is a God of justice and that He punishes sin and rewards righteousness. Job, not only consents to the proposition that God is justice, but he assents to it and vindicates it even with greater zeal than his opponent had done. God is duty bound by nature to do justly and to punish the wrong. Thus far Job gladly admits. But, says Job, tell me how can a sinful being, associated with sinners, limited in every way, maintain his righteousness before God, the Being, "who is wise in heart and mighty in strength"?

Viewed from this twofold aspect (the wisdom and strength of God) what is man? How will any mortal ever prosper by opposing His sovereign rule? Every one, who has tried it, has found it a hopeless case, a futile battle, defeat assured.

Look, for example, first of all at God's wisdom. What a wise Being He is. Suppose He should be pleased to condescend and contend with men? What show would man have in an argument with the divine? Not one out of a thousand propositions, would he be able to elucidate; man would be dumb-founded in the presence of the omniscient God.

Now examine the other attribute of God, namely, His strength. Survey His powers, if you will, and test His strength, and then place yourself before Him and see whether you are able to hold your own over against Him.

See, His irresistible, destructive forces. In His anger He causes, huge mountains, built in the heart of the earth to wane away, and be overthrown; and the earth to be shaken out of its sockets, causing its very foundation to tremble.

The sun is at His bidding, as in the days of Joshua. If He so wishes, it may never appear again. And, the stars, He is able to hide from view.

Watch His creative acts! He brings forth the firmament. He walks upon the waves of the deep. He creates the Northern (Bear), and the Southern (Orion), and the Eastern (Pleiades) constellation. Wonderful are all His works, and His ways past finding out.

Mysteriously, invisibly, He moves about Job, yet he perceives Him not. He is absolute. He can take as He wishes. He is accountable to none, and responsible only to Himself. What creature should ever interview Him, asking: 'What doest thou' (9:1-12)?

Replying to Bildad's second proposition—that wisdom is to be sought with the ancients, Job replies: The almighty and omniscient God carries out His purpose irrespective of the action and will of man. The counsel to seek wisdom from the "former age" (the help of Rahab) will not solve the problem. Those haughty helpers cannot pierce the actions of the All-wise, and decipher his ways. They stoop under Him and leave the mystery unsolved. If, they who are considered wise, are unable to argue with the Almighty, how much less shall Job find words for an argument.

In case Job was righteous, he would not consider these wise, but he would rather pray to his Judge. There he would receive better treatment.

And as to his present condition, if God would answer prayers, Job could hardly find sufficient faith to believe it. His grief is so great. The divine visitations are so heavy. They came suddenly, as the rushing of a mighty wind. His afflictions have greatly increased. The burden laid upon him is beyond comprehension. He is almost exhausted. He can hardly breathe; his heart is broken. Talk not to Job of human strength; what is it, compared with the Almighty's. Talk not human wisdom to him, to solve the riddle of life, what good would it do at the bar of divine justice? Before the great white throne, Job, as well as all of mankind must stand alone. Seeing that majestic bar, he stands already self-condemned. Altho he feels blameless, yet the great grief of his soul causes him to abhor himself. He despises his life (9: 13-21).

In the third place, Job takes exception to Bildad's display of justice and awarding of retribution. Bildad alluded to the fact that only the wicked suffer. Job maintains that both the wicked and the righteous are embraced in the divine visitation—"it is all one." Proof is not far distant. When a disaster befalls a nation the innocent as well as the wicked perish. When the exile comes on, innocent men, women and children are carried away. When war befalls a nation, how the innocent suffer. When a plague comes upon a city, how it encompasses both the godly and the ungodly. Are we, therefore, to conclude that all who suffer are wicked, as the friends maintain? Nay, by no means! A calamity suddenly overtakes a people, irrespective of their moral status. Inasmuch as both classes share alike the prosperity of a nation, so also its adversity (9: 22, 23).

And yet, there is a distinction. The righteous suffer more than the unrighteous. God has a peculiar purpose with His people. He chastises them sorely. He tests their faith and character, with rude measures. He makes them a public laughing stock, and causes them to be ruled over by wicked rulers and unqualified judges. In His providence, wicked men hold the sceptre and illiterate judges hold the bench. If God who rules supreme, be not He who doeth all these things, Job begs Bildad to answer him who then it could be (9:24).

Job now comes to himself and seeks deliverance (9:25-35). He says: My life is fleeting. The successive calamities have impaired my health, and shortened my career. See the messenger running with great speed, fulfilling his mission; behold the ships upon the waters, set with full sail, moving rapidly forward; watch, the eagle dashing swiftly upon its prey, yet with greater speed than these, do I end my life. The swiftest of **land, sea** and **air** cannot keep pace with the fleeting of my life (9:25, 26).

Job now tries to solve the enigma, by unfolding three schemes, of which two are discarded, and the third gives him hope:

1. He says, somewhat as follows: If I resolve to forget the past, and change my disposition and exchange my sad countenance for smiles (the Christian Scientists method), fear would haunt me, for if Thou hast determined me guilty, I shall not be able to escape (29a).

How fruitless it is to oppose the divine power, of the Almighty God, and why should he do it? Since human resolutions will not change His fixed purposes.

2. He continues: If my resolutions will not effect God's displeasure and move Him, let me try my self-righteousness (the Pharisaic idea). Suppose I wash myself with the pure snow and scour my hands with lye,

would that give me strength before Thee? Nay, my self-righteousness will not remove Thy heavy hand, but Thou wilt still reject me, and cast me into the pit, and even the garments which I am unable to wear, will abhor me.

It is a hopeless case; my resolutions nor my self-righteousness are of no avail. I need something greater, for God is not a man (30-32).

3. In his seeming despair, there dawns at least a new possibility; a possibility, which if only existed, would give him encouragement. Since between God and man there is such a vast difference, an **Adjustor** or a **Mediator** is necessary, who can touch both the divine and human, and bridge the chasm between us; this would solve the problem. A thought which corresponds well nigh the Christian view of the Mediator.

Instead of any action on his part, which in itself would be futile, he desires that God should act. He has yet confidence in Him and with Him lieth his only hope. Let Him lift the rod and remove the anger. Then his fear will vanish, his countenance will change, his hope revive, and he will speak, since his conscience does not condemn him.

In chapter ten, Job gives way to his feelings and prays. The afflictions which have come upon him, are gnawing at the foundation of his happiness. He is heavy laden. The burden takes away the cheers and smiles of his life. Probably, he says, if I would unload my burden, by declaring freely and frankly the whole matter, I would find relief. This is what I will do. I will plead with God for mercy, and ask for the removal of condemnation.

He prays that God may give him insight into His mysterious providential ways, for he cannot understand, why God so sorely contends with him. 1. Is it a moral benefit to God that Job His creature should thus be cast

down, and be a reproach to the godless? Or, 2. does God look upon him with human eyes, which look only at the outward condition of man and do not understand the heart? Or, 3. is God's life comparable to that of human creatures, that He hastens Job's suffering, for fear that Job should outlive Him? Job, however, believes it not to be true, since he conceives his life open to Him and that He knows the integrity of his heart. And yet God is supreme so that no one can contend with Him (1-7).

Seeing as yet no light, Job now reverts to the plea of creatureship (8-17). Job claims God as his Maker. His hands created him, and now He hedges him in. Job is wasted away by His power; his children and substance are gone; his life is ebbing away. O, that God might recall how He made him! He took him out of the dust. From the beginning he was subject to His framing. God brought those particles together. God gave him life and the divine blessings smiled upon his pathway. He received the kindness of God, and now his present condition! The why and wherefore, of all this he does not see. God keepeth an account of his sins, and they make him guilty before Him. Whether sinful or righteous, it is all the same. He is filled with ignominy and confusion and his only vision is his sorrow.

Hence Job protests against the divine action. He speaks somewhat in tone like the third chapter. Why was he not taken away in infancy? How he would have evaded all these things which are haunting him now. Aware of the short life which is his to live according to universal belief that his disease was fatal, Job wishes to have his matter adjusted, before he goes to the darkness of the grave (10:18-22).

FOURTH CHAPTER (Continued).

e. Zophar's First Speech, Chap. 11.

Zophar, the last of the friends to speak and perhaps the youngest, seeing that Job displayed with even greater force his seemingly folly, noticing that his comrades had failed to silence him, comes forth with a three-fold argument to capture Job. He appears wroth at Job's persistance. He has no bouquet to give the man who once was universally honored. In a fiery address, he censures the afflicted servant of God, without meeting him in his debate.

Job's last speech had been longer than the others. He had been more explicit in his views. He had become more bold in the expression of his convictions. He had not been troubled with timidity, since Eliphaz and Bildad had spoken. He had declared his integrity. "In chapter three Job did not assert his innocence, but only lamented his fate. And it was possible for Eliphaz tactfully to assume his guilt without alluding to it, and admonish him in regard to his complaints. Even in chapters six and seven, Job only threw out here and there a spasmodic affirmation of his innocence, being occupied with other things, and being deterred by his own sense of rectitude from condescending to clear himself. And Bildad could suppose himself entitled to disregard Job's passing claims to innocence, they were natural, but perhaps scarcely seriously meant. But in chapters nine and ten, Job had denied his guilt with a vehemence which

made it impossible not to take his denial into account. Here was a new element introduced into the strife, which the three friends had to reckon with" (Peake, Job, p. 80). Job certainly believed himself innocent. Yet would not his sufferings tend to show that he was guilty, even tho he had tried to clear himself, as the two friends had maintained? Before this question Zophar is placed.

Zophar belongs to the same school as the friends who have already been heard. With a preconceived view the three friends condemn the sufferer without substantiating their charges. Job looked at the matter from a different view-point, yet was perplexed. To meet the new situation, namely the direct declaration of his innocence, Zophar becomes the chief spokesman. He tries to upbraid Job with the omniscience of the Eternal. Job may be unconscious of his guilt, but God knows, that he is guilty, and if Job would have his desires realized to see God, the Lord would so overwhelm him, that he would stand self-condemned. The address is free from all flattery and the quick-tempered Zophar plunges at once upon his assailant.

In the first part, Zophar attacks the impiety of Job (11:1-6). Job's lengthy speech seems to have wearied him. Perhaps, because Job had not submitted to the premises and conclusions of his companions. If he had only taken the advice given him! But it had all been futile. If any, the advice had worked adversely. As the debate advanced, Job had declared with greater vim and with more fire, that the charges were wrong and he himself was innocent. The defence of Job, seems to Zophar nothing more than rhetorical eloquence. "He taxes Job with loquacity, arrogance and iniquity," consequently as justly receiving his deserts.

In opposition to Job's twofold conception, the theory of life and of his innocence, Zophar utters the desire that

God might speak. If He would, as Job himself hoped, the afflicted servant would be shown true wisdom (this in contradistinction to the many foolish words which Job has uttered), which he cannot see now. Job is receiving less than he really deserved. God is dealing yet kindly with him. Job lacks wisdom and understanding; but how about Zophar? Is it not true as Renkema remarks, that Zophar falls into the same error, of which he accuses Job? (p. 116).

Instead of convincing Job of the error of his ways, as Elihu does; or, instead of pointing to some sin which he can lay to his charge, Zophar makes a bold assertion, which he cannot prove. He appeals to a divine manifestation, which may unmask Job as a great sinner, and prove to him that he is receiving less than he deserves. The doctrine of the wisdom of God no one could dispute. The false, daring condemnation is what hurts the sufferer. Zophar shields behind a would-be shield of God, since he can find no direct sin, which Job has committed (11:1-6).

The second section (11:7-12) is aimed at Job's integrity, which he has stoutly maintained. By inference from the incomprehensible wisdom of God, which is higher than the heavens, deeper than sheol, longer than the earth, broader than the sea, Job is impeached. God's eyes see the false men and His power brings them to judgment. Man's nature is like a wild ass's colt, which was considered a type of ignorance in the Orient (7-12).

The last section, is the practical application of his sermon (13-20). It has much in common with the concluding speeches of Eliphaz's first and Bildad's first discourses. The friends entertain hope for Job. He is not so desperately wicked, that he is beyond salvation. The life line is thrown out to him. Job must return penitently. The arrogant spirit must come down. He must sever

himself from personal as well as marital sins. Then the desire of Job to lift up his head in innocence will be possible. The past will be oblivion; the present bliss; the future glorious. Nothing shall fail him. But if Job, retorts, his sins will be his master. "The eyes of the wicked will fail, And they shall have no way to flee; And their hope shall be the giving up of the ghost." There is no escape; the future will be blighted.

FOURTH CHAPTER (Continued).

f. Job's Reply—His Fourth Speech.

Job 12-14.

In this section Job 'chides his friends', rather sarcastically. Each has had his say about him. Eliphaz had opened the way, and the other two had followed the beaten path. The first speaker had been very courteous, considering the theory which he entertained. The second, became more drastic in his utterances. And the third, had spoken as if Job was receiving less than he really deserved. The great trio had a uniform conception of the problem of suffering. Job stood guilty of some sin, at the judgment seat of his friends. The verdict was rendered upon the basis of the external condition, wherein Job was. The friends had spoken in high authoritative tones, with great enthusiasm, with personal conviction.

We are not surprised, therefore, to hear that Job, ironically lauds their wisdom, which they, evidently have monopolized. Irrespective of this, Job, believes himself fully their equal. He has enough self-confidence, to believe that he is as well advanced in the science of wisdom, as they are, and his speeches prove that his assertion is no idle tale. They have not said anything new. God's attributes, which was their chief argument, were as well accepted by Job as by them. God's righteousness (Eliphaz), holiness (Bildad) and wisdom (Zophar) had

often been the theme of his reflection. Job was able to outclass them in displaying these divine perfections. It was exactly the idea of God which haunted him. "They," says Peake, "are sycophants, who try to curry favor with God by smearing over His misgovernment with their lives. Yet, even in his speech it is with God Himself, rather than with the arguments of the friends that Job is concerned" (Job, 131).

Job dwelt more upon the negative and destructive operations of God. He sees thru the veil of afflictions, as was most natural. Whereas the friends dwelt more upon the positive and benevolent operations of God, as was natural, since they were not men of great experience.

After alluding rather sarcastically to the wisdom of the friends, Job turns to himself, and complains bitterly and justly about the attitude of his friends. "A friend in need, is a friend indeed." It is not the enemy which scoff him, but his friends. He is made a laughingstock of those who purport to be his friends. They allude to his misfortune with contempt. But tables may change. History may repeat itself. What he has, may befall them. Rivers may change their course. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). Now hinting at their theory of the godless, Job maintains that if they are right, then the moral order of the universe is upside down. The facts are that not the god-fearing, but the godless prosper (12:1-6).

Zophar had maintained the exalted wisdom of God, and Job asserts it to be true. The beast of the field and the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea teach us this grand doctrine. And Bildad had said that wisdom was with the ancients. What contradictions! (12:7-12).

Not the ancient, but God has wisdom and might. This is amply brought to light in the verses which follow. With sufficient proof and in majestic terms, his belief in

the majesty and wisdom of God is stated. They do not differ in announcing the attributes of God; Job and the friends differ in the use of these attributes. The friends could not convince Job that their position was right. At times their statements coincide. As to the display of the absoluteness of God, both in power and in wisdom, Job presents a better case than Zophar had tried in the former chapter. Job looks at the creative acts, and sees the great God exercising His power in upholding, concurring and governing all things. His power is immanent, as well as transcendent. In the realm of nature as well as grace, in His power over man as well as beast, in His interest in civil as well as religious rites, in His government over the will of the individual, as well as over a nation, the hand of God is seen (12:13-25).

Having traced the wisdom and might of God in chapter twelve, Job now states that these were no new teachings. They were self-evident facts, which could not be disputed. He knows these things as well as they. He sees this perhaps better than they, and he believes himself as much acquainted; he rightly vindicates his conceptions of the knowledge and wisdom and might of God (13:1, 2.).

Yet, in spite of his knowledge of these facts, Job is restless. His tranquility has taken wings. He is not at ease. He is troubled and perplexed. What can he do, but seek the throne of God and express his desires to God. His case cannot be answered by man. With argument, Job had the best of his friends, yet he had no rest. The friends are

“forgers of lies . . . physicians of no value.”

Their remedy has not healed his wounds. It has torn the breech wider. They had not stilled that anxious soul, writhing in pain. Silence would be their wisdom, and if they would hold their peace, they would be wise.

Now turning to the friends, Job seeks their attention. He pleads for justice and righteousness; he argues for honesty and uprightness. It is as if he wishes to accuse his friends of improper methods. He calls them to consider his cause as one connected with God. Who, then, would dare to speak deceitfully and dishonestly? In itching terms, he depicts the scene as one disapproved of God, which would receive His judgments. Then sending his message home, Job attacks his friends and causes their arguments to falter, as he says:

“Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes,
Your defences are defences of clay.”

Purporting as advocates of God, they sacrifice the truth to their partiality, and their suffering friend to their antiquated theory. Therefore, “he will no longer dispute with the friends; the more they oppose him, the more earnestly he desires to be able to argue his cause before God” (Delitzsch, p. 207—Job). The friends did not know his guilt. They simply took God’s part (as they supposed) against him out of servility to God (cf. Davidson, Job p. 95). Their action, however, being unjust, will bring fear and woe—a theory which Job is trying to refute (13: 1–12).

Then, as if struck with a new idea, as if aroused by some external act of the friends or else prompted by mental deliberation, Job cries out:

“Hold your peace; let me alone, that I may speak
And let come on me what will.”

Job tries to rid himself of his friends; but he could not from his God. He begs for solitude. Why? Because, he knows, that only in God can he find vindication. The best of earth, have denounced him. Only God remains. But here, he finds hope, and well he may. “Nothing in

my hand I bring, Simply to 'Thy cross I cling," was Job's behavior. By taking "his flesh in his teeth" and his "life in his own hands will not alter matters any." He needs God, as every one does, who feels forsaken. In a hopeful moment, faith which had been low, once more towers above every earthly difficulty, and Job speaks great words, full of hope and trust, full of life and blessing:

"Tho He slay me,
Yet will I wait for Him" (Marginal reading).

Conscious of the false accusations which the friends preferred against him, baffled by his own inability to meet the occasion, convinced of his own integrity, Job speaks forth in loud tones, finding consolation and comfort that not the godless, but the righteous are able to come into the presence of the Almighty. If the friends are able to shatter his hopes, let them be up and doing. Job will stand his share of the outcome (13:13-19).

Then turning to his Maker, he requests two things: first, that He may remove His heavy hand; secondly, that He may withhold His terror; then he will plead as plaintiff or defendant, as God may choose. He is so confident of his cause that the adversary may freely select the mode of procedure" (Peake, Job, p. 143).

He wants to know the charges God has against him, and why he is considered His enemy, since he is weak and frail. Of course, Job is not free from sin; neither, however, conscious of any gross sin. He finally falls upon his youthful days, and wonders whether there might be some evil done in those days of wild-oat-sowing, as many a youth does. Whatever it may be, the hand of God is heavy upon him. O, the suffering to which he is put! He is, as one prison-bound. Insignificant as he may be,

Jehovah has put a hedge about him and he cannot evade it (13: 20-28).

What is man, after all! Job learns to number his days, and finds them full of trouble and few in number. "Man's life being so short, his death so sure and soon, seeing he is like a hireling in the world, might he not be allowed a little rest? Might he not as one who has fulfilled his day's work, be let go for a little repose ere he die? That certain death, it weighs upon him now, pressing down his thought" (Watson, p. 177) (14: 1-6).

Man's life to a certain extent is inferior to a tree. A tree, e. g. a willow, may be hewn down, yet new sprouts will come out again. But as for man, he has only one life to live. If he is hewn down, no new sprouts will reappear, neither will there be any awakening (14: 7-12).

Davidson makes Job say that death ends all: "His sleep is death eternal." Is this true? I cannot accept it. Job means, that he has no more hope upon earth after he has been removed in death. There is with him, no sprouting forth anew, like with the tree. That this is Job's view, is evident from chapter fourteen, unless it is that Job in 14: 13-17 awakens to a better self (in the words of Davidson), "with a revulsion created by the instinctive demands of the human spirit, rises to the thought that there might be another life after this one" (Job, p. 103).

Job is desirous of a safety retreat until the divine anger has passed. Just so he could sleep in Sheol and later rise again. If he could only die and then live in a blessed resurrection! Suddenly this hope dawns, this revelation comes, this hope is given him. A momentary inspiration brightens the future. He looks at the sovereignty of God and concludes that His providence reaches beyond earthly portals. He looks, and behold, he sees beyond time and space, a blessed immortality. The hope

of it animates him; the thought of it inspires him; the faith in it revives him (14:13-17).

Tho faith and unbelief are succeedingly interchanged. Job's condition is a dual one. Then he trembles, now he hopes; then he hesitates, now he believes; then darkness hides from view the light of God, now the light shines in brilliant array.

But it is only momentary for the present at least, that Job may see the light. There are some actions even in him which must stand correction. So he falls again in the heavy trial and the battle confronts him anew, and hopes wane and faith is inoperative. As he reasons from nature, he refutes the idea of a future life; he hopes in vain. All nature is possessed with the germ of decay. Dissolution is the indelible stamp which it carries. Mountains and valleys, stones and dust change and are removed. When these giants fail, how can man hope? God is too much for frail man. In the conquest of life, divinity prevails over humanity, God over man. "Time writes wrinkles on the brow, care ploughs furrows on the cheek, affliction ages and enfeebles the most stalwart frame; but O death! for rudely marring and disfiguring the fair temple of the body, man accords thee the palm. Death which is exaltation to the spirit, is degradation to the body. To the one the gateway to glory; it is also to the other, tho only for a time, the door of dishonor" (Pulpit Comm., p. 251).

Furthermore, God as it were banishes him from His presence and cuts off forever, the hope of meeting again on earth. This divides the household and puts the father and son apart. If the former passes to the great beyond, and the latter advances to great honor and fame, the father shall be ignorant of the fact; likewise, if humiliation should come. In short, all associations of the other world with this world, as far as man is concerned, termi-

nate at death. And as to the one who suffers, at the hour of dissolution, pain will harass him, pangs of death inthrall him and the soul within mourneth. A very sad picture, indeed, which one cannot fully understand unless one thinks of one haunted with unbelief,* and feels himself lost, and so sees drawing over him the pangs of death and the shades of hell. Faith is here laid low, that others should not doubt; scepticism seems to prevail, that others should conquer it. The closing words are among the saddest which can be uttered:

“But his flesh upon him bath pain,
And his soul within him mourneth”
(14: 18-22).

Knowing, however, as we do, that Job finally finds rest for his troubled soul in God, these words have a blessed meaning. Job's battles are our comforts. He fought, until God gave him the victory. So all they, who fall into doubts, should retain their trust in God, feeling assured of His grace, until the break of day, when the light shall rise and darkness pass away.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Great Debate—The Second Cycle, The Fleeting Of
the Godless.

Job 15–21.

- a. Eliphaz (15).
- b. Job (16 and 17).
- c. Bildad (18).
- d. Job (19).
- e. Zophar (20).
- f. Job (21).

“Let him not trust in vanity, deceiving himself;
For vanity shall be his recompense.”

Eliphaz (15: 31).

“Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,
And the spark of his fire shall not shine.”

Bildad (18: 5).

“That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the godless but for a moment.”

Zophar (20: 5).

“But as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And at last He will stand upon the earth:
And after my skin has thus been destroyed,
Yet from my flesh shall I see God.”

Job (19: 25, 26).

FIFTH CHAPTER.

a. Eliphaz's Second Speech.

Job 15.

The first cycle had come and gone; neither side had won; the mystery was still unsolved. The friends had accused Job of sinful actions, which was the cause of his downfall; Job had accused his friends of misgivings. The friends had argued three to one; Job had stood alone and overthrown their argument. New channels had been dug on both sides and the streams were becoming more divergent with each round of the debate. The friends had tried to convince Job with allusions to the perfect attributes of God; Job had outclassed them in unfolding these attributes. The friends were more concerned with harmonizing their theory with the situation; Job in being right with God.

Having failed to impress Job with their arguments relative the perfections of God, the friends take recourse in a new method—the swift destruction of the godless. There is now no beacon light held out to the heavily tried man of God; no open door to escape, given; nothing but destruction and devastation is revealed.

As before, Eliphaz leads the way; Bildad and Zophar follow: Job replying to each. What Eliphaz says, his associates say. He paves the way; they follow the beaten path.

In a calm, dignified manner Eliphaz gives his second speech, with which the second cycle is opened.

The presumptuousness of Job has touched him, and Job is rebuked. His arrogance and vanity have caused him to err. His boldness has touched on irreverence. Impious, has been his conduct. His behavior adjudges him. Self-condemned he stands (15:1-6).

Reflecting upon Job's wisdom, Eliphaz wishes to know, whether Job is the primeval man, who lived before the hills were framed, who had been admitted into the secret counsels of the Eternal, so that none could equal him in wisdom (15:7, 8).

Yet, what could Job produce as evidence to show that his understanding superseded that of others? Is not the case against him? Were not the gray-headed and aged on the side of the friends? What can exceed their age? Evidently not Job, who was as yet comparatively young. By putting aside tradition, Job has put aside the consolation of God and showed himself against the highest good. What could be more irreverent than his actions? Why should he stand so independently alone—a man sinful and impure? How can he that is born of a woman be righteous? Even the heavens are impure in God's sight, how much more man, who drinketh iniquity like water (9-16)?

Now, wishing to explain what the ancients taught, he begs Job to listen; those ancients, who inherited the land and lived in seclusion (v. 19 referring to some historical land). He enumerates five sentiments; all relative the wicked: 1. physical (they travail in pain); 2. mental (haunted by terrors); 3. material (insecure in prosperity); 4. domestic (a wanderer for food); 5. spiritual (anguish would be upon them) (17-24).

Eliphaz is like many a modern preacher. He omits the application. His audience can make its own applica-

tion. As in the first speech, so now, Eliphaz is very careful that the sting does not burn too deeply. Just so Job applies these sentiments to himself, that is all, he wants. These sayings of the ancients could be made to apply to Job's case; every one of them. Hence the conclusion of the whole matter, is that Job should be warned by the action of his wicked ways. It is, what we may call, the scare-theory, with which Eliphaz wishes to reach Job.

The cause of such wretchedness is twofold: 1. open rebellion against God and a haughty behavior against the Almighty; 2. a seclusive life devoted to luxury and gluttony (25-28).

Such flagrant impiety will be justly visited. It incurs the divine displeasure. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption". One, who worketh evil, shall reap accordingly. Prosperity shall fail him; darkness will envelop him; calamity shall befall him; his posterity shall be cut off; by the Spirit of God, he will be consumed; cherishing vanity, he will reap vanity; he shall meet an untimely fate; fire will consume him; in short:

"They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity
And their heart prepareth deceit"
(15: 28-35).

The case is clear. Job is the wicked man. There is no other inference possible.

FIFTH CHAPTER (Continued).

b. Job's Fifth Speech—Reply to Eliphaz.

Job 16, 17.

The speech of Eliphaz, tho calm, impassionate and indirect, nevertheless pricked Job's heart. The darts from Eliphaz's quiver were evidently meant for the salvation of Job, altho they lodged in the wrong disk. They made Job more rebellious than ever before. Eliphaz had wholly missed the mark. It was impossible for Job to find comfort in his words. The conceptions which Eliphaz had entertained, were old. Job was probably as well versed in the current proverbs, which were reputed hailing from hoary antiquity, as his friend. Including Eliphaz in this lot, Job censures the friends collectively when he calls them "miserable comforters", wherewith he struck in one beat a twofold object: Eliphaz and his associates, and his traditional heritage (16: 1, 2).

In the course of the debate, one side accuses the other side of uttering vain words. But Job maintains, that if he stood where the friends stood, he would make things lively. Then he could shake his head at them, if they were the sufferers, as they now do at him. Yet he would not do such a thing. He would rather try to lift them out of their degradation, and alleviate their grief with his lips. He would bring solace to the troubled soul, and comfort to the distressed spirit (16: 3-6).

Being unhelped by Eliphaz's address, Job submerges into his condition. He now considers God's dealing with him, since mere words do not alleviate his sufferings and forbearance does not put him to ease. The hand of God is upon him. God is the cause of all his weary, his isolation from home and friends. God's grip upon him, is a point against him; this is what counts. His own leanness is witness of it. God's wrath must be persecuting him, thus he feels. His teeth are upon him, thus he views the situation.

God's attitude toward Job, has given ammunition to the enemy. It has led them to pass unfavorable criticism; they have passed unpleasant judgment; they have formed a trust and unitedly crushed the smaller firm. To their lot, providence has destined him (16:7-11).

Job was in comfort, but God destroyed it. He wrung his neck and broke his heart. God made him his target, and His archers surrounded him. Their presence at first brought fear; now they have dashed him assunder. Like a fortress, he is assaulted. The dress of mourning he has to wear; the horn of humiliation is his. His eyes have been bathed in tears and the expression of death is upon his face. And all this, because there is no violence in his hands (cf. Isa. 53:9), and his prayer is pure (16:12-17). A contradiction of the charge preferred against him by Eliphaz (15:4, 5).

Thereupon, Job resorts to a different method. "The picture of God's furious and persistent attack upon him, so cruel, so undeserved and his pitiful description of the sad extremities to which he is reduced, kindle his flaming indignation and wring from him a thrilling, passionate appeal against the injustice of his fate. The shadow of death is gathering on his eyes; there is no hope of recovery; he is to be done to earth. Nothing is left then, but a vindication of his fair fame for those who survive

him. Hence he calls out to the earth not to cover his blood" (Peake, Job, p. 167). In his awful agony, all argument is futile, every petition comes to deaf ears. Job, nevertheless hopes for redress, even tho it be after death. He is conscious that one in heaven, has record of all his doings, and he entertains the hope, that while the friends scoff him, God may some day clear him of their gross accusation, and his name may go down in history unimpaired. He hopes for a speedy justification from on high, since his present outlook assures him that his end will soon draw nigh and he himself be no more (16: 18-22).

Connected with the idea of a speedy end, chapter seventeen opens and corroborates this fact, since his condition warrants such conclusion. It has been called the "requiem of a dying man" (Pulpit Comm., p. 296). Job's spirit is consumed; his grave is ready; his days are extinct. How could prosperity ever return to him, as the friends had promised in the first cycle of the debate? What do they know about it? They are mockers, that's what they are. They are provoking him continually and his visions will not penetrate beyond it (17: 1, 2).

Turning to God, he desires that the Almighty should become his surety and pledge, since he can pledge by none higher—a pledge that some day he might be vindicated. Since the friends who came for consolation, have been blinded by divine power, and so their visions cannot avail. And they who sacrifice their friend to a theory, shall bear reproach unto succeeding generations (17: 3-5).

Once more the afflicted Job, laments the dire state into which he has fallen. His fame, which was formerly widely known, has become a by-word of the people. He is illtreated. His body is wasting away; his eyes dim by reason of sorrow. What a blow it will be to the upright!

How is it possible! How even the innocent will now take exception to the godless, since they mock a man like Job.

But faith is not always low; stars do shine some nights. Suddenly faith soars to lofty expression again. The righteous go from victory to victory. "Yet shall the righteous hold on his way". Rumors cannot deaden Job's hope and false reports will not destroy his faith. Cost what it may, Job 'hangs on'; he knows that

"Perfumes, the more they're chaf'd the more they
render
Their pleasant scents".

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church". The pure will become more strong thru every trial and faith more sure. Yea, all things will work together for good to them that love Him (17:6-9).

Such characters, however, are rare. The inhabitants of the earth are set on evil. Their wisdom is foolishness with God. The friends make no exception to the rule. Let them speak, if they wish, it will not help matters any; it will, however, reveal their ignorance. Everyone of them, perhaps the ancients included lack understanding (17:10).

Again, Job falls victim to his feelings. His pain and anxiety override his faith. He laments his dire state. Like one near the gates of eternity, he sees his days numbered, his purpose cut off, his thoughts unrealized. The friends may entertain other ideas, but they simply mock, since they have changed night into day, and darkness to light (17:11, 12).

In such straits, what can he do? Shall he give up the battle and consider himself beaten? What will he gain, by retreating? If his feelings conquer his better self, what may he hope for? Yet all is dark, night has fallen

upon him; the light does not break forth. Give in? Nay, never! Faith cannot be totally conquered. He hopes against hope. He believes even tho he cannot see. By giving in, would be no gain. What hope could he look for from Sheol his future home, if he slew himself; what can he expect in a resting place that entertains darkness; or where the worm is his mother and sister, and corruption his father (this against Peake, who says: "If Job hopes, his highest expectation is Sheol for his home, a couch in its darkness, the pit for his mother, the worm for his sister", Job, 176). Faith speaks against every visible manifestation that it shall ever be realized. To believe is better than to despair, is to me the meaning.

And as to his hope: "The shelter of his true hope, the hope of a vindication, which descending with him to the bars of the unseen world, might be lost to the eye of man and in large measure to himself, but would rest beside him in the dust till the moment arrived for its public manifestation" (Pulpit Comm., p. 300) (17:13-16).

FIFTH CHAPTER (Continued).

c. Bildad's Second Speech—Reply to Job.

Job 18.

At the outset, Bildad attacks Job's actions. He accuses the sufferer of Uz of interminableness in his words. He has gone too far and failed to hold himself, to suit Bildad. The friend, desired a shorter route to get at the whole matter. He does not perceive the fact, that the bottom of a mine is reached only after passing thru many channels, by sinking a deep shaft.

Bildad is put out. He claims Job has treated them harshly. He complains about Job's behavior. He wants to know why Job accords him and his associates such an unfriendly reception. Why does he consider them so impious and unclean? Poor Bildad, forgets the "mud-slinging"; he forgets where the storm had brooded; he forgets, that the friends had turned their mission to the welfare of his enemy and had caused the engendering of bad blood.

But, whatever the case may be, Bildad is touched sorely, because of Job's actions. He accuses Job of violent rage, and as acting the part of a mad-man (cf. Barnes, Vol. II, p. 147). He taunts Job for his arrogance and pride, and wishes to know whether the earth should change her course and nature her laws, to suit a person like Job (18:1-4). That was the consolation which Job got from his friend. How true it is, what the poet sings:

“A friend is gold, if true, he'll never leave thee,
Yet both without a touchstone, may deceive thee.”

Having repudiated the actions of Job, Bildad hastens to describe the doom of the unrighteous (18: 5-21). The address is composed of a series of proverbial expressions, perhaps borrowed from the ancient, since Bildad in his first address admonished Job to look thither for wisdom. Having accused Job in the opening part of his address; having quoted the sayings of the ancient, there is no need to mention names. The tone is too personal; the address too keen to be misconstrued. The discourse is aimed at Job; Job is the guilty one; and, behold his destiny! There is no call to repentance, no consolation, no hope. Simply doom and destruction await the wicked. Bildad substantially repeats what Eliphaz had said in his second address, tho his expressions are more severe and his attack is more personal.

The description of the doom pictured is graphic. Adversity is pictured under the symbol of light extinguished. That is, prosperity is gone. Darkness reigns. Hence he cannot be hospitable and the spark or flame of fire shall not shine. The kindling of a fire was an emblem inviting the stranger to share the hospitality of the home (cf. Barnes, Vol. I, p. 248). It being gone, entertainment was impossible. He was cut off of the fellowship of others. Hence, he was as one forsaken. In short the wicked are forsaken of all associations (5, 6).

Was this not Job's condition? What light was still burning, beaconing the stranger and friend to come to his tent? Had not adversity come to him? Was he not suffering the doom allotted to the wicked? Hence, the conclusion must be that Job is wicked.

A new symbol is introduced. The prosperous walk with a strong step. His haughtiness manifests itself in

his walk. The wicked, however, shall not continue to uphold such an attitude. His strong walk shall be hindered. His own counsel will put him down. Being unwilling to listen to the admonition of others (if he did, his condition would be different), he stands condemned at the bar of his own conscience. Was this not meant to chide Job's unwillingness to heed their warning? Had it not been the teaching of Bildad that if Job would listen to him and his comrades, he would enjoy prosperity? And now, since the strong walk which Job had once enjoyed when the greatest of the children of the East was broken, was it not self-evident since Job's lot was so changed that Job was guilty (see verse 7)?

Verses eight to ten tell us how the wicked (Job) are ensnared. The poet nearly exhausts the vocabulary of this peculiar symbol. Several illustrations of traps and snares are brought forth, which were used to catch wild animals. The idea conveyed is that the tempter lays the snares, but the wicked walk in willingly, since they will not heed the danger signs. The wicked one, like the animal, walks on the toils (the underground snare), and is entrapped. The idea is plain. Job walked into the snare willingly, because he would not heed the warning. That is why he suffers. He is himself to blame.

The doom upon the wicked is that they will be haunted with fright and fear; their strength will wane; universal doom shall be their lot. Their body shall waste away. Elephantiasis shall lay hold of them (cf. Peake, Job, p. 181). Their personal trust shall be outrooted; death, the king of terrors shall receive them; strangers shall be their heirs; brimstone (a sign of accursedness) will be scattered over their habitation; their family extinguished; their memory perish; their name forgotten. Personally, each one shall go adversely, from light to darkness, driven out of the world, without retaining pos-

terity; East and West will unite in amazement (marginal reading). Such are the ways of the ungodly (11-21).

Also this section has been partially fulfilled in the life of Job. What terrors haunted him; what perplexities confronted him; what a waste of his body by that dreaded disease, is marked; how his children have been mowed down; how speedily death may overtake him; how his name has been polluted and associated with sin and sinners; how his memory is about to perish; how Job, the great, had gone down hill: from light to darkness. Assuredly the points of contrast are too many, the allusion too direct, the application too near to allow any misinterpretation. Job is the sinner. Job stands adjudged at the bar of Bildad. Job is fiercely wicked. His sufferings were proof of his guilt. A warning comes yet to him in the destruction and total doom of the wicked.

FIFTH CHAPTER (Continued).

d. Job's Sixth Speech—Reply to Bildad's Second Speech.

Job 19.

The debate as it advances, does two things. It brings the breach wider and produces clearer evidences of the issues involved. The position of the friends is not very clear in the first cycle, but with the advance of the debate there is no doubt about their position. Likewise, Job as he multiplies his speeches, brings out more clearly the underlying current moving in him, at the same time presenting the perplexities with which faith has to meet.

Bildad's second speech irritated Job. He had made his point so clear that he could no longer be misunderstood. He had sounded the 'scare-alarm'. As a last resort, he tried to awaken Job's conscience with the frightful doom awaiting the wicked. The doom, which manifested itself upon Job, was none other than that which the wicked share, altho Job did not yet receive its full content.

Replying to Bildad, Job shows his displeasure greatly. His heart is broken at the false accusations hurled at him. O, how hard; how heartless are his friends! But friend, thus it is we hear Job say, whatever your theory may be relative my suffering, I am not guilty. And in case it is, that I err, what is that to you?

I shall have to stand for that myself, and not you. You may heap the sins upon me as you have done and accuse me, yet I am innocent. My integrity forces me to reply to you. Your actions impel me to speak, what I do not like to say. If you want to know my views, here they are: My sins do not bring this calamity upon me; a higher hand has touched me. I am not self-ensnared, but God has ensnared me (1-6). How could Job escape infinite power? How could he untangle the net woven around him? If God has ensnared him, as a fowler the bird, how helpless must he be? How can he be blamed for all this?

The portentous accusations open the way for a renewed outburst of lamentation. The calamities befallen him, are once more recalled, tho with greater feeling and passion than hitherto. Being wronged, he cries for help, but there is no answer. He pleaded for help, but no help was sent. His appeals elicited no reply. The door of heaven seems closed to him. Prayers seem to be of no avail. The door to God's throne appears closed. Do what he may, there is no reply. What a position to be in; what a sad tale to record, which he believed to be true! He looks for aid and none is brought; for strength and none comes. What else but despair could creep in. He is walled in like an ancient city, and he is unable to mount its top. "Troilus..may mount the Trojan walls" (Shakespeare), but not the wall made by God. All is dark to Job; his glory is gone; his crown has fallen; his heart is breaking; his hope is plucked up like a tree. O, the depth of his misery, and without a vision of the Father's love. He feels nothing but the power of an angry God. His Maker whom he has served, hides His face, withholds communion. He can believe nothing else, but that the Almighty counted him His enemy, since the divine troop has surrounded him—it is an army irresistible.

ble and strong, powerful and mighty; he is helpless at the approach of the divine array (7-12).

Not only is Job helpless under the pressure of the higher Hand, but he feels himself also forsaken (13-20). Terrible idea! God against him; man forsaking him. His brethren are distant; his relatives estranged; his acquaintances fail him; his familiar friends forget him; his servants disobey him; his wife is strange to him and his loved ones have no ears for his cries. The children of the street are against him; his friends have left him; his loved ones are 'gone on him'. The anxiety has caused his flesh to fail. What a condition to be in! O, that loneliness—God and man forsaken! How like the man of Galilee, the Savior of the world! How like Him, who tread the path alone, tho deeper and different than the man of Uz!

Seeing that arguments will not terminate a happy issue, his tone changes. From the depth of his heart, he, therefore, cries to his friends: "Have pity upon me, O ye friends,

For the hand of God has touched me".

All arguments are laid aside. Words are of no avail. He needs sympathy. The lonely need sympathy. In this his wail for pity, he anticipates, he may touch some cord of the human heart, which will respond and bring consolation. But for this he can as yet not hope; since both his friends and his God persecute him. If his friends could only leave him in his physical suffering, but they emulate God Himself (21, 22). An awful state to be in! Heaven and earth offer no hope to him. Something must be done; will be done. Things cannot remain as they are. A change must come; it is coming.

In this awful solitude, Job nevertheless believes in his integrity; he still hopes for vindication some time; his faith still struggles (23-29). If only his cause were

recorded; his case embedded in the rock, carved in eternal stone, then there would be hope, even tho he cannot see it now. Some day his case would be properly adjusted. Then suddenly by divine inspiration, faith leaps to its apex and in that classical passage, Job rises to larger visions:

“But as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth
And at last He will stand up upon the earth;
And after my skin hath thus been destroyed,
Yet from my flesh shall I see God” (marginal reading).

Whatever view may be taken of these verses, and they have multiplied largely in recent years, the hope of Job is in a Redeemer beyond the spheres of this life. The loftiest thought is born with heaviest pangs. When Job lived in that terrible loneliness, his soul awakens to higher spheres and his faith climbs the dark walls and unveils the hidden secrets, until the immortal Judge is seen. Job was alone: yet not alone. Job felt forsaken; yet he is not forsaken. His Redeemer lives; he himself will see Him, in the blessed immortality. Tho but a worm now; tho weak and frail at present: Job scans the walls of time until he reaches eternal shores, where all wrong shall be righted; where he sees no more thru a glass darkly, but face to face. His heart is absorbed in this grandeur.

If his friends still insist upon pulling him in the mire and upon taunting him while his powers are decaying, they may be assured of another world, where justice shall be meted out; where, called before the great white throne, real judgment will be executed and the sword will break thru and fell the evil-doer.

“O the sweet joy this sentence gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives”.

FIFTH CHAPTER (Continued).

e. Zophar's Second Speech—Reply to Job.

Job 20.

Vexed by Job's address, Zophar, the man of coarse speech and quick temper and little sympathy, hastens to reply. He begins an impetuous harangue, for he has been deeply irritated by Job's words. The references in Job's speech which have so provoked him are probably 19: 2, 3, 22, 28, 29 (Peake, *Job*, p. 197). Others are of the opinion that 19: 28, 29 alone moved him to quick action (cf. *Pulpit Comm.* p. 339).

Zophar will not shoulder the onus of guilt, which Job has tried to put upon him and his associates, for he believes Job guilty. He says himself, that his temperament has been roused by Job's action. Therefore, his wild, untamed nature is master and he speaks in harsh, severe tones (1-3).

Zophar's main argument is: the temporal prosperity of the wicked. Job must be aware of this fact and he cannot gainsay it. Since primeval man, this has been so. The prosperity of the wicked is only temporal; his joy only momentary. Even tho he may rise to high honors and be seemingly successful, still his downfall is inevitable. His fame vanishes as a dream; his renown as a vision of the night. And altho he was, he shall be as if he had not been. His posterity will befriend the poor and he himself shall pay retribution, and tho full of the

sap of life (R. V.), or of sin (A. V.), his doom is sealed (4-11). This section must have been aimed at Job, since Job had enjoyed prosperity for a season and had been greatly blessed, until the divine visitations.

Secondly, Zophar describes the wicked in their craftiness, and how it shall be brought to nought. To the wicked one, evil may be a pleasure. He may indulge in it secretly and conceal it under his tongue, he may keep his hypocrisy to himself, yet it cannot remain thus always. A change for the worse will come. The sweet will become bitter; his food will change to gall. His awfulness is described as follows:

“He hath swallowed down riches and he shall vomit
them up again;
God will cast them out of his belly.
He shall suck the poison of asps;
The viper’s tongue shall slay him”.

“He may disgorge the gains he has so greedily gulped down. The figure of God administering the emetic is coarse and powerful, as befits Zophar” (Peake, Job, p. 199). The fertility which comes by the inundation of the Nile for example, or the milk and honey which abound in the Holy Land, shall be foreign treasures. His income shall be as treasures borrowed, which must be returned (12-19). This section is aimed at Job, and accuses him of greed and attempts to make Job known as a hypocrite. That Job was guilty of avarice was merely an assumption, which Eliphaz unfolds at length in his last speech. That Job had taken advantage of the poor and taken property by violence, was wholly untrue according to the divine testimony given in chapter one. How did Zophar come to such a charge? He argued from the effect to the cause. Job’s calamity was similar to

that of a wicked person, hence Job must be wicked. Wickedness is the cause of the calamity. Men of high degree in the Orient were generally men who committed sins as here alluded to. Zophar does not say right out that Job has done these sins; this is left for Eliphaz to do in his last speech. The former paves the way for the latter. Still the question centralizes around Job, and by inference it may be accepted that Job is thought of, as having committed these sins. What Gemung says, may be applied here: "The friends seem to have in mind some notorious evil of rich men seizing houses by violence and turning them to their own use" (p. 242).

In a vivid description of the fate of the wicked, Zophar concludes his discourses, no more to speak. The wicked-one shall perish, and with him his pride, that is his message: his curse shall rest upon succeeding generations. The wrath of God shall visit him unexpectedly. Terror shall befall him. A supernatural flame shall reduce his tent to ashes. Heaven and earth shall unite in a combined plot against him, and all that he possesses shall be consumed.

Such a picture is evidently portrayed, as predicative of Job's future. Zophar brings the matter to all but a happy issue. The future is dark and sad. He offers no hope for relief; no method of escape. There is no outstretched hand to raise the afflicted; no thought of meditation for the trembling soul. Woe and anguish are the ultimate fruits which he must reap. No notice is taken of Job's bitter wail, crying for pity; no sympathy shown. Job's final expectation of a just retribution at the revelation of the Redeemer, is ignored; faith does not speak. O, for some kind word of cheer; for some good counsel! How it is cherished in such trying days!

Of course, there may be some wheat, with the chaff. Zophar's speech is not void of all truth. To speak of the downfall of the wicked is indeed proper. "The way of transgressors is hard" (A. V. Prov. 13:15b). To uphold the justice of God, is a noble act. To show evil-doers the harvest which they may expect to reap, is just. But to infer that suffering is always a test of godlessness, is to eliminate chastisement as well as vicarious sufferings. Then, the Man of suffering and acquainted with grief, would stand adjudged a sinner of the worst type, and with Him some of the most pure in heart. Indeed, "many surmises of evil, alarm", but to weigh character upon surmises cannot bring hope; nay, it aids to blight hope. God forbid that men should judge by this standard!

FIFTH CHAPTER (Continued).

f. Job's Seventh Speech—Reply to Zophar's Second Address.

Job 21.

Commencing with this address, the discussion takes a happy turn. Hitherto, the subject matter has been more or less discussed around the personage of Job. Now the matter is, at least to a certain extent, more objectively considered. It is admirable to see Job rise above himself and discuss the matter objectively (cf. Schaff-Lange, p. 484).

Job requests another audience with his friends. If they are not convinced, after he has finished, they may continue their venomous accusations. Job is well aware, that he must connect his sufferings with God, and not with man. But, it is exactly this, which he is unable to comprehend and they have falsely explained; it is this, that makes him tremble (1-6).

Now turning to the theme which Zophar had brought forth with great power, namely that the wicked were cut off suddenly by the anger of God, Job brings him to task. That the wicked are punished, he knows as well as his friend. But that he always receives his deserts already in this life and that suddenly by divine visitations, he proves to be untrue (cf. Calvin, Sermon 78).

Job takes exception to his friend Zophar. Forgetting his situation for a moment, Job calmly looks into the case

of the wicked. Zophar has claimed for them a hasty destruction. Job sees things differently. If it is so that God puts a speedy end to the wicked, why then are there so many living? Why is it that the wicked grow in power and age? Why is it that their children increase and multiply on the earth? Why is it that their substance is not taken away? Why does not God punish them with the heavy rod? Their herds increase; they enjoy life and get the best out of it. They die at last and without the fear of God, they pass over to the great beyond. They mock at God and at communion with him. Yet they prosper; but how? evidently by a higher hand than self. 'Now all this is contrary from what has befallen me', Job would say. 'I have not come thru all this. I did not despair of God. I did not give up prayer. Am I not still living, tho my substance is gone? The counsel of the wicked is far from me. The prosperity of the wicked under providential rule is a mystery' (6-16).

Having shown positively, contrary to Zophar's theory, that the wicked prosper, Job continues negatively to show that calamity does not always befall the wicked. He is looking for facts. How many cases can be produced where the lamp of the wicked has been put out (cl. 18: 5, 6, 12; 20: 23)? Instead of future generations suffering for his sins, he maintains Ezekiel's famous doctrine of individualism (cl. Ez. 18), (17-21).

As to the moral order of the universe, Job believes in the absolute omniscience and omnipotence of God, who giveth according to His free will—He distributes to one, a life full of strength and ease and plenty; to another, a life of hardships, of bitterness; at last both indiscriminately return to dust, and "the worm covereth them". All die; no favor is shown (22-26).

In a discourse so refined and beautiful, Job turns to his own case and refutes the doctrines of the friends. He

is aware of their insinuation, wherewith they would wrong him. They have asked: Where is the house of the prince (i. e. Job), and what has he in common with the wicked. Job believes that the evidences of the way-faring men co-incides with those he advocates. The evil-doer does not receive his full deserts here below. The consensus of opinion is that the wicked are reserved for the final day of judgment. But in this life the wicked are powerful; they are rarely withstood; most people are afraid to attack them (for another view, cf. Davidson, Job in loco). They are borne to the grave with honor; their tomb is guarded; even nature does not oppose them; and a large funeral procession follows them to their last resting place. Many examples of such cases can be shown, and evidently, many more are to follow.

Yet the friends have associated Job with the wicked. Rather should they have consoled him. Hence they stand rebuked. Job reproves them for their vain endeavor and charges of falsehood (27-34).

How often the "good" are classified with the "bad." Even to-day, we must say:

"Ah me!

The world is full of meetings such as this."

(Willis.)

Calvin's remarks are not out of place, when he says: "If God visits persons with disasters, we should not immediately pass sentence of condemnation and say that such people are wicked and hated by God and rejected by Him. . . . Furthermore, God will chastise those whom He loves, not because they have committed gross sins. And, if we do not understand the 'why', it, nevertheless becomes us to humble ourselves before God, since God wishes to be praised in all His works, even tho we do not understand the cause"

SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Great Debate—The Third Cycle.

Actual Sins Charged.

Job 22-26.

- a. Eliphaz (22).
- b. Job (23, 24).
- c. Bildad (25).
- d. Job (26).

“Sow an act and you reap a habit;
sow a habit and you reap a character;
sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

SIXTH CHAPTER.

a. Eliphaz's Third and Last Speech.

Job 22.

Job Accused of Gross Wickedness.

Eliphaz, as before, opens the cycle. Unlike his former attitude, he is irritable, unkind, undignified, unsympathetic in his utterances; he is bold, plain, direct in his accusations.

He opens his speech by seeking an answer to the question, whether virtue, in itself can be any benefit to God. The implied answer is, that no man profits God. God is too great and His creatures too dependent to bring any virtue to the essence of God (1-3).

Then follows a course which he has not used before. He attacks Job for having committed overt crimes. How does he get at such a charge? By asking the question, whether God would afflict Job for his reverence. To Eliphaz, such a thing is impossible. So there is only one alternative. Job is suffering for his guilt; at least so Eliphaz concludes. Eliphaz is right and he is wrong. He is right in connecting suffering with sin. He is wrong in applying the universal to the particular. It ever remains true, that where there is no sin, there is no suffering. It is likewise true, that all suffering is not a result of personal sin, which an individual has committed. There is a solidarity of the human race which we must reckon with.

Yet Eliphaz, applying the universal to the particular, falls in all kinds of falsehoods. He charges Job with

great crimes, commonly committed by Orientals of high position. "It is plain that on his part, these were purely gratuitous assumptions," says Cowles, "for which he had not the first particle of proof. All that he knew as to Job's sin in these points or any other, was his own false theological inference from Job's great sufferings. According to the Mosaic law, which in these points seems to have been fully in harmony with Oriental ideas, to take a pledge for no consideration to which he who takes it, has no just claim, was deemed a mean and wicked outrage on the poor man's rights. To take the poor man's garment which not only covered him by day, but wrapped and protected him from the chills at night, was especially oppressive and outrageous. So also, to withhold bread and water from the suffering was a violation of the most sacred rights of hospitality—nowhere more sacred than in the Oriental world. And yet farther, to give the land to the mighty and honorable, while he sent widows away empty and crushed the orphan, was a crime to be held in detestation" (Job. p. 125) (4-9). Cowles' illustration, however, can only have weight as a comparison, since it is not possible to declare dogmatically the age to which Job belongs.

In these gross sins, Eliphaz found the cause of Job's sufferings. Job has finally been caught, like a roaming beast of prey. Now, since he is ensnared, he is seized with fright and is terrified. His light has gone out; darkness has enveloped him; waters have covered him (10, 11).

Since these charges were based on presumption and received from a priori reasoning, Eliphaz feels the uncertainty of his charge, wherefore he calls on God to substantiate these facts. God evidently took note of Job, tho Job considered Him as modern Theism does—aloof from the world which He created.

He denies the theory of Job that the wicked have no sudden, divine, evil visitation. He concurs with Zophar and believes that God does punish the wicked. The flood of Noah's day, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah substantiate these truths. How the unrighteous were exterminated! This is God's way. The righteous rejoice in these deeds, since they are vindicated and permitted to remain, and the enemy is laid low (12-20).

With verse 21, we have the old friend Eliphaz—sympathetic and kind, re-appearing. Job may yet entertain hope. The second cycle had failed to extend any hope. But now the door is again opened, and the afflicted, fallen Job may yet enter, if he will turn his life's course and acquaint himself with God. The ideal relationship existing between God and the pious is set forth from the human side in terms of knowledge. If Job would only learn to know God, peace would return as the break of dawn, goodness would follow in his life's path.

Since Job is considered destitute of such knowledge, he is admonished to acquire it. The only way to receive it, is by receiving God's law and to allow His words in his heart. In other words, Job must renounce his own stubborn will and follow the will of God. He must cast aside the god, which he has chosen, and receive the real, true God, as his possession.

If Job will follow this course outlined to him, he is guaranteed personal blessings. He himself shall be built up and enjoy the greatest treasure any one can expect, n. l. the Almighty God. He will be restored to fellowship with God; the Lord will raise him up; answer his prayer; he, himself shall be a power and his intercessions shall be vicarious. In full confidence in God, he shall receive untold blessings, not only for himself, but also for others (21-30).

SIXTH CHAPTER (Continued).

b.—Job's Eighth Speech—Reply to Eliphaz's Third Speech.

Job 23, 24.

The accusations preferred against Job by Eliphaz have no more effect upon him, than water upon a duck. Seemingly, all energy exerted to persuade him of his guilt, is wasted. None of the friends can compete with Job in debate. In argumentation, Job had the best of his friends. Hence, in his sight, the friends are wrong; consequently, he dissents to the words of Eliphaz. In the seventh speech, Job had outgrown, at least for a while, his troubles. In his eighth speech, we find him in his old ruts, tho never as deeply, as hitherto. The great advance in the debate is, that Job nowhere asks for alleviation of pain as he had formerly done. He is growing admirably in the proper direction, which terminates in the final solution. The idea of God, concerns him more, henceforth. He seeks to obtain His favor and to understand His greatness.

Yet Job is still wavering. Suddenly he is carried away again with the trend of his mind and he gives full vent to his feelings. He declares publicly that his complaint is rebellious. Yet he seeks his own justification. The pangs of his heart are driving him. "The stroke is heavier than his groanings". The depth of his

anguish cannot be understood by man, since no one shares exactly his 'fate'. His real distress no one could see; it lay hidden like the roots of a tree, tho firm in the time of storm (23:1, 2).

Nevertheless, the depth of his anguish is pushing his faith upward. He longs for an interview with God. If he could only enjoy this! If he only knew where to find Him! The debate was running its course without any issue. The human mind was mute at the great theme, it sought to explain. The human intellect was baffled at the riddles of life. Feelings had taken different courses, and a compromise seemed out of question. God, however, who stood above man, could settle the matter. Job wants Him. He desires to bring his case before Him. He knows an appearance before the divine bar will acquit him. He hopes in the mercies of God and believes that the divine love will embrace him.

But, Job does not see Him. His sight is so obscured that he fails to see any distance beyond himself. His sufferings have blinded his visions and his pain has formed a cataract over his eyes. God is present, of this he is confident, even tho he does not see Him. Whatever point of the compass he faces: forward (East), backward (West), left (North), right (South), God is hid from view, and yet He is there. The poet has not the full faith of the Psalmist, who sings: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, lo thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 139: 7-12). The passages have much in common, especially in describing the omnipresence of God (23: 3-10).

How absorbed Job was in himself; what a battle it brought; what storms passed over him! What tempests rage and billows roar, when these experiences come upon

us! How the wild waves toss our little bark to and fro.
O, for a pilot to land us!

“Jesus Savior pilot me,
Over life’s tempestuous sea”.

Job believes that an interview with God would be of great blessing. He believes the outcome would be glorious; even for himself, he believes that it would bring him thru the ordeal purified and purged like the gold tried by the refiner. This his firm conviction is not altered by any slanderous word of the friends (23:10-12).

As he reflects on God, he sees Him as an absolute, immutable Monarch, holding universal sway, whom no man can turn, who executeth His decrees irrespective of man’s action (23:13, 14).

Instead of applying the sovereignty to good advantage, by seeing certain victory and a loving Father’s hand to help His child up higher, it becomes a snare; the thought of it haunts him; terror lays hold of him. Job had not the Master’s example to imitate, when in the great spiritual conflict in Gethsemane. He said: “Thy will be done”. Job had not the Savior’s teachings, when He taught us to pray: “Thy will be done”. No light can come until the sufferer will repose in the Will of the Father, who is in heaven. Job must believe that His providence is good as well as just (23:15-17).

Basing his arguments upon assumption, Eliphaz had condemned Job as one who had violently transgressed the laws of God. Specific sins had even been mentioned; Job was pictured as of a low, mean character; one who took advantage of the social standing of the poor, of the orphan and of the widow. Job was declared guilty of extortion. Meeting these charges of his opponent, Job,

forgets his own trials and considers the phase objectively. Eliphaz's deductions are invalid. Those who indulge in crimes of which Job has been accused, are not cut off; they are prospering. Job remunerates the charges and shows how untrue the inferences are. They, who remove the landmarks and exact pledges; they, who practice extortion from the poor and needy, the fatherless and widow; they sow and reap; they enjoy health and strength; their prosperity goes on, unhindered. But, the cry of the wounded; his prayers for relief are not answered. God simply allows the foolish to go on and regardeth not their folly (24:1-12). The notoriously wicked like the murderer, the adulterer, the thief and others—persisting in their evil, live on. They go on their evil mission and are not stopped. God does not punish them visibly upon this earth (24:13-17). Eliphaz's walls crumble before the heavy artillery discharged by Job.

Besides, the great evil-doers hate civilization and are a curse to the advancement of every good cause. Even their own mothers disown their wicked sons, altho in this world they never receive their just deserts (Cowles, p. 137). They are divinely permitted to walk in security and enjoy prosperity. Such facts cannot be curtailed. Who can adjudge Job a liar (24:18-25)?

That God has no special interest to adjudge the notoriously sinful, stands to reason, tho He may do it at times, as He did the cities of the plains. As a rule they are reserved unto the day of wrath, and therefore, have no need of disciplinary training, of which the child of God may be in need of, and of which even a man of Job's caliber had need of; as shall be presently seen.

SIXTH CHAPTER (Continued).

c. Bildad's Third and Last Speech—Reply to Job.

Job 25.

The powerful discourse of Job, as given in chapters twenty-three and four, seems to strike the deathblow to the theory of the friends. It is true that Bildad ventures to speak once more, yet he does so very briefly. The foundation of the house built by the friends is tottering; the props are undermined; a collapse is inevitable. Blunt Zophar, harsh and coarse as he had been, has nothing more to say. It would seem as a "large number of critics think that the brevity of Bildad's speech is intended by the poet to indicate that the case of the friends is exhausted; if so, it is not surprising that Zophar altogether fails to speak" (Peake, Job, p. 231).

Bildad's third speech is the shortest of all the addresses. It has but six verses. At best, Bildad deals only with generalities, which cannot be compared with the bulwark which Job had built. Bildad's speech is a comparative study of great themes; e. g. infinitude and finiteness; sovereignty and subject; God and man.

First of all, we have here an eulogy on the greatness of the Almighty. It is as beautiful as it is brief. God holds supreme sway. Even "earthly potentates derive their sovereignty from Him" (cf. Prov. 8:15; 1 Pet. 2:14); reverence is becoming His Majesty. He maketh peace to reign; discords to cease—angelic warriors and

rebels are cast from His presence. His armies are legion; His host as the sand of the sea shore. His knowledge pierces into the secret chambers of every heart; "there is no creature that is not manifested in His sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13) (1-3).

Now, overagainst such a high, exalted Being, he compares man (4-6). How can man, conceived and born in sin (Ps. 51) as he is, be just with God? Since sin is innate, how shall he escape the wrath of the Almighty. If the celestial planets are stained, how much more terrestrial man? "It is simply monstrous to suppose that frail man, whose feebleness is the result of a depraved moral constitution, would ever succeed in securing acquittal before the bar of a holy God" (Pulpit Comm., p. 424).

Bildad argues that since the whole human race is corrupt, which of course includes Job, therefore Job must be a sinful being. And now, for Job to maintain his innocence, is simply denying the corruption and depravity of man.

The idea of sin and suffering in this address, are specialized in the case of Job. The argument produced nothing new to condemn Job. If it argued from generalities that Job is a sinner, and at the same time that all men are sinners, then Job stands guilty, but not any more than the friends. Why then does not affliction befall them? Defeated, Bildad retreats, and therewith, the friends together. The wrong must ultimately be abandoned and its advocates retreat. Only truth can stand and will endure. It is thus with every ancient and modern theory, inventions of men; but truth will never be conquered. It triumphs evermore, since it is eternal.

SIXTH CHAPTER (Continued).

d. Job's Ninth Speech—Concluding the Great Debate.

Job 26.

Henceforth, according to the received text, Job has the field alone. Triumphant, he has held out, until his friends vanish from view. It is amazing, how one afflicted like Job, could hold out against those who viewed the subject supposedly externally. Weakness out-classes strength; it reminds us of what Paul says: "When I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:10). It goes to show the Spirit which lay behind Job. How loyal he stuck to his conviction! When the man of God has the thread of life gnawed away by an incurable disease, he holds on his way (cl. 17:9a). Baffled on all sides, he goes on hoping against hope. Whereas the "friends withdraw discomfited from the contest" (Green, p. 232). It is at this point that chapter twenty-six commences.

It is not clear whether verses 1-4 are addressed to the friends (Barnes, Renkema), or to Bildad, the last speaker, only (Calvin, Peake). Since Bildad has just spoken, it seems most natural, that Job should reply to his speech. Barnes thinks it possible that Job himself is thought of. Herder connects it with God. The subject of this section is more or less difficult. It is quite possible that it refers to Job, tho I am inclined to think it more probable that it refers to Bildad, who had just

spoken. The irony of the whole section, bears proof to the fact that it refers to Bildad. Bildad's speech had worked adversely. It had not extended a helping hand to lift up the man of trials and afflictions out of his degradation; it had failed to give a clear-cut route which one might travel to obtain it. The irony is sharp; the chisel cuts deep. The friend had left the matters unchanged. Job had not been benefited by the brief address of his opponent, the friend of tradition.

The section which follows (26:5-14), is joined to chapter 25, by many modern scholars, who make it a continuation of the display of God's power as described by Bildad. How any reasonable person can adopt this theory is hard to understand, since chapter 25 is properly balanced, and to put it there, would unbalance the whole chapter; besides, it would make futile the attempt of the writer, to mark Job superior to his friends.

If this section belonged with Bildad's speech, then it would be Bildad's display of the power of God. As it is here, it gives Job's display of the power of God. Job, frequently followed this method. He sifts the truth out of the theory of the friends and then puts it in greater terms and makes it even more impressive than the friends do.

Why should Job not display the power and glory of his Maker, as Bildad had done? In chapter nine, Job, following Bildad's address on the righteousness of God, had spoken of the adorable righteousness of God; in chapter twelve, Zophar had presented a great theme, and Job follows it right up with a fuller explanation of the same subject; why, should Job be curtailed in this chapter? Why may he not do the same thing here?

Considering this section as coming from Job, the intent is to show the power and majesty of God, and a second reflection will show that Job has done his task well.

He is in no wise inferior to Bildad. He places God, as sovereign Lord of both the living and the dead. Sheol and Abaddon cannot be hid from His sight. The North (probably the pole-star and its associates) are placed in their fixed courses. The earth hangs unsupported. The waters are bottled up in the clouds, yet they do not break. God's throne is concealed by 'clouds and angels'. The waters are stored away in reservoirs. He has put corners to light and darkness. His voice is so commanding that the pillars of heaven shake at His bidding, and the sea is troubled, and Rahab (perhaps Egypt) is smitten. He paints the beauty of the heavens and pierces the serpent by His Spirit. Such is only a hint to His greatness. It is simply the outskirts that have been dwelt upon. Only a remote part has been dealt with. It is like an inaudible tone so distant. O, He is so great! His forces are too great for our conception. He is too wonderful for our comprehension. Great as He is, yet His softest whisper we hear, as well as the roaring thunder of His power overwhelms us. He, as Job has said:

“That doeth great things past finding out
Yea, marvelous things without number” (9:10).

Well, may we, therefore exclaim with Paul: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out” (Rom. 11:33).

SEVENTH CHAPTER.

JOB ALONE.

Baffled. Yet Believing.

- a. Destiny of the godless, C. 27.
- b. Human wisdom inferior to the divine, C. 28.
- c. Autobiography—retrospect, C. 29.
- d. Autobiography—introspect, C. 30.
- e. Autobiography—prospective, C. 31.

Formerly:

“When my steps were washed with butter
And the rocks poured me out streams of oil”

Job (29: 6).

“And **now** my soul is poured out within me,
Days of affliction have taken hold of me”

Job (30: 16).

SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Job alone; a. The Destiny of the Wicked.

Job 27.

After a pause, probably to give Zophar an opportunity to reply, since he did not appear when his turn came at the end of the third cycle, Job extends his discourse, unhampered by the interruption of the friends.

Job opens this chapter with an oath-bound-allegiance to the truth. Altho heavily afflicted, still he is not yet gone. His mind had not been effected by the dreadful disease which was wasting his body; on the contrary, the Spirit of God is in his nostrils (1-4).

Job cannot concur with his friends, not any more than Jehovah can (see C. 42). Hence, he again defends his integrity. The spirit which he here reveals, shows a man fighting with the last drop of blood in him, to uphold his honor and his integrity. Nothing can swerve him, so he believes, from his course. His conscience bears him witness. It is a beautiful passage as far as it manifests the character of Job. It closes with a reproach against his enemies, wishing them the cursed lot of the wicked (5-7).

Having spoken of the woes which he desires to see realized upon his enemies, Job metes them with the measure which they have employed against him. He whips them with their own lashes. Peake thinks (and many with him), that verse eight and following, give us

exactly the position of the friends. "Job bluntly contradicts his (former) statements" (Peake, Job, p. 239). I rather believe that "Job cannot refrain from taunting them with the completeness of their failure in an argument which they have been conducting with so much pretension. He then seizes the opportunity to guard his language against misconception" (W. H. Green, p. 232).

Over against his own integrity, Job points to the hope of the godless. He may heap up abundance of wealth, but in death when God taketh away his soul, he shall enjoy no delight in God; he shall have no recourse to true prayer. If these things were possible, there would be no need of service now. Job's life cannot be compared to the wicked, since he has never fully severed himself from God. Hence the impeachment is false (8-10).

Job now admonishes the friends to listen to him, as he wishes to teach them, the counsels of God (11, 12). He shows how the unrighteous and wicked have no stability, and in verses 13-23, he reveals the destruction with which the Almighty shall visit them. Three great instruments will accomplish this destructive work—sword, famine and plague. Without lamentation this mission shall be executed. Their dwelling shall stand as a booth and shall be destructible as moth.

The child of the godless, as well as the godless himself, shall perish. He may die unawares at night; or, he may arise in the morning and then pass away. He cannot escape death, God's tool. Men shall welcome his end with joy, and his remains shall be derided.

It is especially this section with which scholars have had trouble. Is it true that Job here retracts (Pulpit Comm.), or contradicts himself (Peake), or now, that the heat of battle was nearly over to own up, how far he agreed with the friends and what difference there was

between him and them (Henry), or perhaps that it belongs to Zophar (Watson), or foreign to the text (Davidson, Job, 186), or, “it was of importance to Job, not so much to instruct the friends in regard to the fact that the impending destruction of the ungodly was certain—for that they had long known this fact is expressly set forth in v. 12—as rather to place the phenomenon in the right light, in opposition to the perverted application, which they had made of it and to exhibit this profound connection with the order of the universe as established by the only wise God” (Lange-Schaff; Renkema).

SEVENTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Job Alone; b. Human Wisdom Inferior to the Divine.

Job 28.

Since the friends do not reply, it is natural that Job takes different excursions and proceeds with different themes. The themes may have been suggested by reflection upon Zophar's speech upon the wisdom of God, or perhaps thru reflecting upon what he himself had said in C. 26.

Job has come to a better self, since the field is open before him. The friends being silent, he is no more pressed as hitherto. The situation is more calm. It is also well to note that chapters 26-28 make no reference whatever to Job's suffering. The theme became loftier as the enemy fled. Strife engenders strife, warms the blood, overruns reason. But since no opposition is apparent, a more rational view can be entertained.

Chapter 28. stands closely related to the question of philosophy. It is generally conceded that the Semitic mind is unphilosophical. It is avowedly declared that there is no Semitic philosophy and the philosophy which is found among the Hebrew or Semitic life is foreign. Whereas this chapter is quite philosophically constructed, it has been stamped as a foreign product, evolving during the rise or growth of Grecian philosophy. This theory, if accepted, forces us to take other portions of the Scriptures from other sources (e. g.

Eccles., portions of proverbs, etc.). Many, of course, do not hesitate to do so either.

It must be admitted that the Semitic mind is more sentimental than intellectual, more imaginative than rational; still to deny it the right as well as ability to deliberate upon a theme so lofty and so universal as the one under consideration, is putting up hedges, which no one can prove that they existed. There is a certain amount, of what is termed "philosophy" found among all nations. Chapter 28 need, therefore, be no obstacle as far as the line of argument is concerned.

It is true, the connecting link between this chapter and the previous one, is hard to find. One can find one, if he is so inclined, and which the opening word "For" (marginal reading), as Renkema has rightly shown (p. 204) requires. In chapter 27 Job has shown the destruction of the godless; in chapter 28 he shows the cause which leads up to such destruction.

Duhm, the foremost living Bible critic of Germany, suggests that the refrains of v. 12, and v. 20 ("Where shall wisdom be found" and "Whence then cometh wisdom") should find a place at the opening of each section. This would remove the difficulties to a large extent and would aid the interpretation immensely, but it would destroy the oratorical effect.

The first part deals with mining operations, and it is claimed that it is the only passage in the O. T., where "we have any detailed description of mining operations. Palestine on account of its geological formation, is poor in minerals, tho not wholly destitute, as we learn from Deut. 8:9" (Peake, Job, p. 247). The great copper mines, as the inscriptions tell us, were in Sinai, Assyria and Lebanon.

How great is man's power! His ingenuity in respect to the hidden treasures of physical phenomena is mar-

velous. Gold, silver, iron and copper are taken out of the heart of the earth and put to his usage. He brings them out of the darkness into light. Where none live nor walk, he sinks his shafts and procures the hidden riches, with which he stays famine and starvation. Beneath the reach of fowl or beast, these precious stones and metals, he finds. All this, man by his cleverness and ingenuity is able to bring to the surface and adopt to useful ends. What a great and wise being he is! Yet his wisdom is limited. How limited, when he thinks of the eternal? How admirably, he obtains his earthly possessions; how hopelessly he struggles to obtain the other!

Since man is void of true understanding and wisdom, the author hears the personification of the great deep and mysterious sea, respectfully exclaiming: "It is not with me". Treasuring wisdom highly, he fails to obtain it with the weight of gold and silver and precious stones. It outweighs the price of silver; it outvalues the gold of Ophir and the precious onyx and sapphire. The possession of wisdom is not obtainable with the costliest glass or jewel, nor purchasable with the high valued rubies and topaz. No metal how costly it may be; no gem, how highly it may be prized by man, is able to compare with true wisdom. Man may have power over the hidden treasures of nature and exceed the animal world in knowledge, but when it comes to the Wisdom of God, he stands as powerless as the beast of the field over-against the treasures of the ground and hills (13-19).

Since neither the power of man can discern Wisdom, nor the costliest of earth's treasures is able to purchase it, nor the deep able to present it, Job looks to the powers of "destruction and death", and hears them say that a rumor of it has come to them (20-23).

No creature in heaven or earth or under the earth possesses the inherent qualities of Wisdom. It is use-

less to look to them for an explanation, or for the source of wisdom. It is only to be found in God. He knoweth its ways and understandeth its place. He is the real source (24-27). He is the only source. He is unbound by human limitations; boundaries cannot be staked around Him. His omniscience, His omnipotence bear sufficient proof. His eyes pierce thru to the remotest ends of the earth and to the farthest part under heaven. No one possesses such perceptive powers. His creative acts substantiate it—it is He, who weighed the mind, measured the waters, decreed the rains, and ordered space for the flashes of lightning. At creation He had these already planned, already decreed their places. There is no fate; on the contrary: a true, wise intelligent God, whose providence goeth over all things, shows the creative acts by His love.

And as to man, God has permitted him to share His blessings. How man should, therefore, praise and glorify His Name! How man should divorce himself from evil! This is wisdom.

Job had scanned the heavens, dug the earth, walked the universe, traversed the deep to find the Wisdom of God, and he failed. But when he looked to God, he found it, and also means by which man might share its blessings. Undoubtedly this chapter has much in common with the eighth chapter of Proverbs. In the fullest sense, man cannot penetrate the Wisdom of God. Thanks be to the Omniscient God, who permits him to share at least a part of it by His grace—yea so much, that he may go on his way rejoicing. And in the fuller revelation, he finds the Master, the Son of God, the eternal Logos, the archetypal, absolute Sapiaientia, the Head of His church, thru whom are all things (cf. Renkema, p. 209).

Great as man may be, profound as the deep may seem, priceless as the value of gold and silver and stone

is: all are destitute of the true source of Wisdom. Hence we look not to Greece or Rome, not to Babylon or Egypt for wisdom; we look not to the gold of Alaska, or the diamonds of Africa to pay its purchasable price: we look up to Him, who holds the reins of men and shapes their destinies; we look to Golgotha for its purchasing price and find Jesus Christ made unto us the Wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:30).

SEVENTH CHAPTER (Continued).

c. Autobiography—retrospect—C. 29.

After a brief pause, Job takes up a parable again, in which he reviews his life. This chapter deals with a résumé of his past greatness.

Being unswayed by an irritated passion, Job recalls his past life, when the stream of life flowed his way, when God bestowed nothing but sunshine upon his path, when the Infinite smiled upon his home, when befriended by God and loved ones, when prosperity winked at him, and adversity was foreign to his tent, when he was a judge sitting in the city gate, whom the young respected, princes honored, nobles esteemed (1-10).

Holding such a lofty position in the social order of his day, only a word from his mouth was necessary, and all believed it, whether near or far. "They that saw him as he lived among men, bore testimony to his goodness" (Davidson, Job, p. 204). Why all this? because of his great deeds and useful life. He had a "big heart", full of mercy and benevolence. The poor and fatherless found in him a blessed pacifier. The perishing, he helped to save. The widows, he caused to rejoice. Impartial were his decisions. His court stood for justice (11-14).

As to his actions toward the afflicted—these were the most laudable. He helped where help was needed. The blind and lame, the needy and unknown received his personal attention. And as regard the wicked—they re-

ceived their just deserts. Men got what they needed. There was no respect of persons (15-17).

With such a life's record to look back upon, he had hoped for a glorious sunset. He had no thought of misfortune. He had not the warning: "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). He thought himself deeply rooted by the fertility of waters, sprinkled with the dew drops from above. His glory was not to wane; his power not to decline. He stood in full vigor; in the prime of manhood. Men heard his decrees and left unaltered his decisions. Every-body was anxious for his word. They waited for him with great patience. His behavior was everywhere respected. His words were a solace to many a troubled soul. He was dictator, controlling like a king, the leadership and thought of a large army of men, who stood eager at his bidding and welcomed his decisions.

In this whole chapter, not much is said or implied about religion. Job recalls his life and gives us a vivid description of one who held an important place in the actions of the men of his day. Job had played an active part in the society in which he moved. He had put his talents to usefulness in the interests of others. There is no mark of selfishness; no sign of arrogance; no thought of gross sins, of which his friends had accused him. Nay, Job had served his generation well, as every one should.

SEVENTH CHAPTER (Continued).

d. Autobiography—introspect—Job's Present Condition.

Job 30.

Job was once great, and highly esteemed. "But now", he rightly opens this chapter. What a marked contrast! Social etiquette was even inverted. Men had always respected those older in years. But now, how even a sacred custom had changed! The young men of a low social class, whose fathers Job would even disclaim to set with dogs of his flock, insult and deride him. These scoffing youngsters, however, could not help him, even tho they were so inclined, since the vigor of manhood in them, had been drained with vice and crime, long before they had reached maturity. "Such imbecility sinks young men to the lowest point of worthlessness and contempt" (Cowles, 158). These young men who have allowed their vitality to be wasted by sin cannot be of service to him, neither can they be blessed. There is no hope for them ever reaching a high age. They are visited with famine and are famine stricken. They roam the waste places for food gnawing the dry ground of the desert, like animals of the pasture. Roots of bushes aid in keeping the wolf from the door. Looked upon as thieves, they are forced to leave civilization and wander in desert places. "The dwellings of these

wretched trollodytes", as Peake puts it (Job, p. 260), are somewhat akin to those which the early Christian martyrs were forced to resort to; they live in valleys, holes and rocks (Heb. 11.38). They, the outcasts of civilization, the children of base men, assault him (1-8).

"And now", so Job starts the ninth verse. And now, what? he is a laughing stock to the basest of men, in contrast to the best of men who formerly sought his associations. Job is the song they sing; the by-word, which they use. He is treated cruelly, despised, spat in the face. God has given them the reins and unmercifully they have used this liberty to torment him. They—these young rabblers, these young savages—have fallen upon the patriarch; they drag his honor in the mire; they convert Job's affliction into a scourge. That hurts! Who will deny it! Honor and welfare gone; O the condition of Job (9-15)!

This change is too great, too sudden. Instead of being honored, he is abased; instead of being obeyed, he is mocked; instead of joy, he has sorrows. His happiness has changed to woe; his esteem, to mockery. So Job, cries out, once more: "And now". Job no more looks at the past. There is now no retrospect; on the contrary: an introspect. The reverses upset his soul; his inner agony is his greatest conflict. He is terror stricken day and night. When he is awake, he is haunted with fear; when he is asleep, horrible dreams upset his rest. And the thought that a higher Hand than human sends it, is his great complaint. It is hard to be abased by the basest of men; but to think that God would abase His servant was beyond apprehension. Yet it is so. Job is cast into the mire; he becomes like dust and ashes. He cries to God for deliverance, but no deliverance comes. God has shut His throne. The Inalterable One, does not alter His course. He simply smiles when Job rises. He

thinks God cruel; God is persecuting him. The wind carries him away; the storm wrecks his life; there is only one outlook—none other seems possible. Death will soon overtake him, and the lot of common humanity he will receive (16-33).

Verse 24 starts a new section, and could be read, conform to verses one, nine and sixteen, "And now". In such straits, mocked by the filth of man, and persecuted by the sinless God (the two extremes) Job is about to give up in despair. Yet, he asks whether one who is fallen may not yet stretch out his hand, perchance help might come; perhaps the life-line might be caught? One drowning, will he not cry for help? Why should not Job weep over his calamity, as he did in former years when it befell others? Why may he not be grieved over his condition, as he once grieved over the condition of others? His former course seems out of harmony with that of his present condition. Living in happiness, thinking to end his career with glory, and now! Looking for good and behold evil came; waiting for light and behold darkness entered. With every means cut off and all hope blighted, Job is deeply troubled. Tranquility is foreign to his heart. His outward condition is something frightful. See how black he is! Watch how his skin changes, not by the hot rays of a torrid sun, but by his terrible disease. He has turned black in skin as well as heart. His associations are cut off with all mankind; like the jackals who roam the desolated places; he is barred from society. His disease has put a hedge around him, like a man cast behind the bars. His flesh is wasted; fever eats up the strength of his bones. Naturally, the harp is playing a different tune, his pipe a different song (24-31).

What a change! Wealth, home, loved ones, friends, associations, usefulness, ambitions, hopes, aspirations—

all changed! "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12).

SEVENTH CHAPTER (Continued).

e. Autobiography—Prospective—Vindication.

Job 31.

This speech of Job is his last stand. Having rehearsed his past life (C. 29), and having considered his present wretched state, Job now proceeds to vindicate his integrity.

First of all, Job claims that according to a personal pledge, he has vowed himself against evil desires (Matt. 5: 28). "With Job's large number of slaves, the temptation as history proves was terribly real. Not only does he refrain from actual seduction, he will not even suffer himself to give away to longing. The inwardness of this morality is quite in keeping with the rest of the chapter" (Peake, Job, 267). If he was guilty of this sin, he would expect the Almighty to punish him for it. He calls the omniscient God to corroborate his innocence (1-4).

Secondly, Job declares that if he has walked contrary to the truth, or if he has been a liar and perjurer, he is willing to be weighed (cl. Dan. 5: 27). He is positive that he will be able to stand the test. Should he, however, be found guilty, he is willing that his harvest should pass into other hands (5-8).

Thirdly, if he is guilty of adultery, it would be a heinous crime, a fire that consumeth into destruction.

worthy to be punished with heavy punishment, such as the destruction of his own home, with the forfeiture of his wife as slave to another (9-12).

Fourthly, his guilt cannot lie in maltreatment of his servants, since he respected their individual rights, and he would be unable to clarify himself before the great white throne (in itself, a remarkable idea in morals) (13-15).

Fifthly, if he has illtreated the poor, the widow, the orphan, or withholden from the hungry food and from the needy raiment, or treated any unjustly (tho the contrary is true), then he wishes his shoulder to fall from his shoulder-blade, and his arm broken from the bone (for he fears vengeance of God), calamity of God is a terror to him (16-23).

Sixthly, if he has been guilty of idolatry, whether by making gold his "God," or his huge possessions, or by worshipping nature as the sun and moon, he would be punishable by the judges, since he would have been guilty of denying the God who is blessed forever (24-28).

Seventhly, Job continues in the hypothetical way to the close of the chapter, and keeps the results or curse in suspense until the end. It contains also a prayer for trial. a. If he had been guilty of malevolence (altho he frees himself of this charge) (29-30); b. if he has been inhospitable to strangers (his servants, however, will free him on this charge) (31, 32); c. if he has been guilty of covering his sins like Adam, because he feared the people in the gate—suddenly he breaks off and commences to pray (like in chapter 41:11, where the practical part is also thrown in the middle of the passage); he prays: O, for one who would hear. Job will give him his signature. He wants to see the adversary's indictment in a written form. It means, he is calling for a trial, evidently in the higher court above (e. g. 13:3; 19-24). He

would carry his accusations and wear them as a crown. He would meet him and show him his moral conduct and walk like a prince, so sure is he of his integrity. "A stronger assertion of substantial innocence of the previous charges preferred against him by his opponents, Job could not have made. He declares himself ready for an investigation before the infinite God" (Cowles, p. 169): d. if he had shown injustice as a landlord, then let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley (29-40). The words of Job are ended. "He has no theory and can imagine none upon which his present sorrows can be accounted for. His friends undertook to silence his complaint, but he has silenced them. He holds fast to his faith in God, but he does so notwithstanding troubled questionings, of which he cannot rid himself, that have arisen in his soul, and notwithstanding the presence of facts which he can neither escape nor explain away, and which seem to be direct contrariety with the divine attributes. . . . Uneasy apprehensions mingle with his thoughts of God, which he is unable to still. There is an unrest in his soul, which he cannot compose. Satan has not been able to destroy him, but he has plunged him into darkness and distress, out of which he cannot find his way. His pious trust continues. . . . But will God suffer his servant to go on in darkness unto the end, bearing his heavy burden and hoping against hope? Must Job die under the clouds?" (Green, 240).

EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Elihu Intervention.

**God Sends Trouble To Correct And
Warn The Righteous.**

Job 32-37.

- a. An apology, 32.
- b. To Job about God and man, 33.
- c. To friends about Job's conduct, 34.
- d. Religion profitable, 35.
- e. Chastisement vs. judgment, 36.
- f. Bowing to the great God, 37.

“That which I see not, teach thou me.”

Elihu (Job. 34: 32).

“Remember that thou magnify His work,
Whereof men have sung.”

Elihu (Job 36: 24).

EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Elihu's Intervention.

a. An Apology For Speaking.

Job 32.

With this section, the "harangue of Elihu" opens. Elihu is taken note of, only in this section. The prologue does not mention his name, nor the great debate, nor the Jehovah speeches, nor the epilogue. He appears unannounced and disappears unnoticed. He speaks, yet is not answered. He enters upon the scene strangely, and disappears as he enters.

In this age of criticism, as may be expected, Elihu has been hotly pursued, and the evidences of his position greatly contested. Some have pitched him over-board as an intruder; others have accorded him a later origin (thus the majority of modern critics); others have retained his addresses as a part of the original work.

For our purpose, he is greatly needed. He forms the connecting link between the speeches of the great debate and the Jehovah speeches. If he is merely an interlude, like the dramatists maintain, simply to ease up before the last great scene of the Jehovah speeches, akin to the classic drama and Shakespeare, then chapters 38-42, are inconceivable, and become unintelligible.

Elihu apologizes for speaking. The opening verses (1-6 a) are written, like the prologue and epilogue, in prose. It informs us that the three friends have ceased to answer Job, "because he was righteous in his own

eyes." The attitude of the friends, as well as that of Job, kindled the juvenile speaker. He can not refrain from speaking. His age had kept him in restraint up to the present time. Orientals, always gave precedence to age. Elihu will not trespass this sacred heritage. But, whereas Job has put his friends to silence and he himself has quit, without bringing the matter to a satisfactory issue, he believes himself justified in speaking. What incited fire in him and what animated his courage? It was the fact, that "Job justified himself rather than God", and that the friends had condemned Job, without making a case.

Elihu apologizes, because he is but a youth; they are old compared with him. This has kept him in self-restraint hitherto and held him from divulging his opinions. Days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom—a practice which is still living to-day. But, since neither greatness nor hoary heads have solved the mystery, and so are destitute of Wisdom, he believes that custom may be laid aside and one filled with the Spirit of God may be permitted to speak. His creed conforms with the saying of James, that Wisdom cometh from God (James 1:5), holding to this his creed, he asks for an audience (6b-10).

Elihu had waited with great patience the progress of the debate. Perhaps he had come that way, and seeing the strange sight and hearing of the heavy trials of Job, associated himself with the humble four. At any rate, he has heard what has been said. His opinion is that the friends have accused Job, without convincing him of his wrong. They have not proven their statements, insinuating the man of Uz, and they have not provided evidence showing that the great sufferer was guilty of the crimes charged against him. He admonishes the friends to be on their guard lest they boast of Wisdom,

which they do not possess, for Job is still master of the situation. Since Elihu has not been addressed hitherto, he feels himself unhampered by prejudice and unswayed by partiality, he has a clean field before him, without obstacles in the way (11-14).

Now soliloquizing, he sees the friends amazed at Job's advance upon them and power to silence them with his single weapon. But because, these men were silent, should he be silent too? Because these men are silent, why should he wait any longer? Should he hold his peace because they have no answer? To him, this seems unnecessary. As a bashful orator, making his maiden speech, he has another apology to offer for speaking. He is full of wrath. Like a race-horse, he wants to go on. He cannot hold himself back. He must speak. Different from most young fellows, he is full of words. Perhaps he has been collecting thoughts as the debate was on. He is so full now, that he bubbles over. He is greatly excited over the situation. Speaking will bring him relief. He therefore concludes to speak, and promises to be impartial in his utterances, withholding himself also from flattery terms (unlike Eliphaz in his first speech), and titles. This his course is prompted by his fear for his Creator (15-22).

EIGHTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Elihu's Intervention — b. To Job About God and Man.

Job 33.

With this chapter, Elihu addresses Job. The speaker's youthful timidity is again marked. Verses one to seven form another introduction. Job is requested to listen, since his youthful friend has made a start and wishes to go on. But Job must not misconstrue his motives; only the best principles prompt him to speak; an upright heart, upheld by the divine Spirit, moves him to act. Consequently, Job is requested to listen, and if possible, refute his arguments. He believes his ancestry equal to Job's. His words will not crush him, and he will not terrify him, which God might do, if He should speak. He, therefore, puts himself forward as a sort of mediator.

1. Having taken note of the speeches which Job had spoken, Elihu begs to take exception to his teachings. Job has tried to exonerate himself from all sin and he has accused God of unjust dealings. Job, however, is wrong, since God is greater than man, and He gives no account of His deeds (8-13) (which is exactly the impression which the Jehovah speeches give).

Job's claim of innocence is attacked, and his accusation of ill-treatment from the hand of God, assailed. In discussing these, the quotations from Job are not verbatim. The arguments against Job are based upon the

greatness of God; a first thought, suggests their logical inferiority. A second thought, however, brings a better opinion, since the discourse as a whole, is the most difficult of any, and the line of argument here produced, is the one which the Book gives as a whole, and in which the troubled soul of Job finds rest. Elihu's discourses are, therefore, a step in the proper direction (cf. Cowles, p. 177).

2. The visitations of God are a ministry of love, is Elihu's second proposition. Dreams and visions kept men in restraint in days of old. God sent them to aid man in saving himself from his own evil inclination and to rescue him from self-destruction and to bury his pride. The heavy rod which inflicts pain and engenders disease and causes the appetite to wane, his life to ebb, leanness to overtake him, and the end to draw near, is sent for good ends. Its mission is to nullify and drown man's pride, and to cause him to accept the supreme will of God (14-22).

If man would be willing to be corrected by the message of an angel or messenger, the mercy of God would flow upon him, his sufferings would be balsam for the wounded heart, salvation would be assured, purity restored, vigor of youth returned, prayers answered, associations with God reinstated, repentance publicly shown and the song of redemption sung (23-28).

Such disciplinary training one receives in God's school. It may be hard to endure, still its issues will be blessed. It will restore the soul and diffuse the light. It is well that Job should hear the admonition of Elihu. Should he wish to speak, alright; out with it. Elihu will be his champion. If Job has no reply, he should continue to listen to his youthful instructor, who means well and who feels competent to teach even the venerable aged (29-33).

The tone of the chapter is gentle and sympathetic. The teachings are two-fold: the sinlessness of God, and improper conceptions of God's providence corrected. The caution is: God is greater than man. The comfort is: God sends all ills, not to reject, but to accept man, and to train him to rely upon God instead of trusting in his own goodness. The attitude of Job should be three-fold: submission, confession, rejoicing in salvation.

EIGHTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Elihu's Intervention—c. To Friends About Job's Conduct.

Job 34.

Having maintained the justice of God over against Job, Elihu now turns to the "wise men", who were either the silent listeners, like Elihu had been, or perhaps better, the friends of Job. He would have them listen as he speaks. He desires that they with him, should constitute a jury before whom Job should be tried, as it would seem Job is incompetent to consider these matters. Elihu is chief prosecutor and perhaps chief judge. His complaint may be based upon utterances of Job like those expressed in 13:18; 16:19; 19:6, 7; 27:2-6. The quotations as in the previous chapter are not verbal. It is true that Job has said things which no mortal has a right to say. The charges brought against Job are, that he has said: "I am righteous and God hath taken away my right" (v. 5). In spite of his declaration of innocence, Job had been adjudged a hypocrite, a liar (1-6).

It is true, that Job did declare that: "I am righteous" (13:18). He implied it also in his words: "Even, now, behold my witness is in heaven. And He who voucheth for me is on high" (16:19). Besides, Job had declared: "Know, now, God hath subverted me in my

cause, And hath compassed me with his net. Behold, I cry out of my wrong, but I am not heard; I cry for help, and there is no justice" (19: 6, 7). In 27: 2-6, he had taken the same stand.

Elihu in replying, hardly keeps his promise to be gentle in his speech, when he says:

"What man is like Job,
Who drinketh up scoffing like water.
Who goeth in company with the workers of iniquity
And walked with wicked men?
For he hath said: it profiteth a man nothing
That he should delight himself with God" (7-9).

By being God's spokesman, Elihu could give the verdict, before the trial had actually taken place.

After preferring the charges against Job, Elihu hastens to defend them. He starts with the second charge (God taketh away my right). Such an accusation does injustice to God. God is not sinful nor wicked; His deeds prove the contrary to be true; God is judge and gives to men their deserts. God's inherent character forbids injustice (10-12).

Besides, the greatness of God shows his perfections. As Creator, Upholder and Governor of the universe, He shows His unselfishness, and His goodness, for were He set only on Himself, He would disregard the world and withdraw His Spirit and all flesh would perish (cf. Davidson, Job, p. 233) (13-15).

Thirdly, God's moral perfection is shown in His government. "Shall even one that hateth justice, govern"? Justice is the foundation-stone of all government; take it away and all rule vanishes. Associated with His justice is His might, by which He can execute justice. Who will, therefore, lay any charge against Him? Who will

charge Him with partiality? How can any, yea, how dare any accuse Him of vileness or wickedness? That God is just, His moral government proves. See, His judgment exercised upon kings and subjects, and how they perish! Think of revolutions, of pestilence, of Sodom and Gomorrah (cl. Renkema, p. 244), (cl. verses 16-20).

The omniscience of God is the fourth reason advanced for the justice of God. God sees all the activities of men. No darkness can hide from view; no gloom conceal man's deeds. A trial is not even necessary to bring men to account. History shows this — some persons are crushed and men discern not the reason thereof; others are exalted in their places. God is the silent recorder of every act of man. Even if men's deeds are wicked, they are divinely visited. Their destruction is a living example and a true warning for others (21-28).

If God, therefore, metes out to men, both weal and woe, both personal and national affairs, in order to carry out His purpose, relative the wicked that he may not succeed in his efforts, and relative the righteous, that he be not ensnared, why should man murmur or oppose His just retribution of right? If evil-doers would repent and turn to God, the case would be different. But this is not done; none confess their guilt; none seek instruction; none entreat forgiveness; even Job falls in with the rest (29-32).

Job has chosen his own, instead of God's course. Job has thereby chosen that which good men call, foolishness, consequently he is swept off his feet. This should not continue thus; on the other hand, Job should own up his guilt, so as to escape punishment (33-57).

Hence, Elihu concurs with the friends that Job suffers for his sins (cl. Peake, Job, p. 293). He differs from the friends, in that he shows how warnings are sent to the righteous to keep them from their evil inclina-

tions. Suffering according to the friends was a manifestation of sinfulness; according to Elihu it was a manifestation to warn good men and correct them. The one had a condemnatory effect; the other, an encouraging effect. The friends bring Job to destruction; Elihu to correction.

EIGHTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Elihu's Intervention—d. Religion Profitable.

Job 35.

Turning once more to Job, Elihu wishes to show that Job has asserted wrongly, that:

“It profiteth a man nothing

That he should delight himself with God” (34:9), (cl. 21:15). Job's theory was that righteousness in itself (or wickedness) would not bring outward possessions nor immunity from suffering. It is this theory, which Elihu seeks to overthrow (1-4).

Elihu maintains that goodness or badness, in themselves would not effect the heavens nor the skies, nor God. But it does effect man. Eliphaz had also dealt with this question (cl. 22:2). Wickedness will harm a man; righteousness will profit a man (5-7).

Job had complained that prayer was not heard. “The soul of the wounded crieth out; yet God regardeth not their folly” (24:12). The way Elihu answers Job is, by telling him, that the trouble is not that God refuses to listen, but because men are moved to pray without proper motives. True prayer should be prompted by devotion and reverence; not by complaint or trouble. This is the explanation of the anomaly, as Davidson calls it. Job's prayers had, indeed, been too full of complaint. Such prayers are selfish in their motives and do not attend to the glory of God. Prayer is to many, a tool

to nourish selfish ends. To such prayers God has no regard, since they are vanity (9-13). How this doctrine has received a wider circulation thru James, who says: "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures" (James 4:3).

As to Job, Elihu maintains that God would not listen to him, since his petitions were nothing but empty cries. But he may be assured that God has taken note of it just the same, even tho He does not visit at once in His anger the displeasure with which he regards the behavior of Job. Job has declared that God does not regard the arrogant. Job has misjudged the government of God and is guilty of speaking vanity and multiplying words without knowledge (14-16).

In this speech Elihu concurs with Eliphaz's idea about the rewarding of righteousness and the punishment of sin. That is, with man it is of uttermost importance that he should live right in order to expect to receive outward blessings. Furthermore, Elihu brings Job where he should be. Prayer must have a higher aim, than mere self. Job's sighs had been too much a rebellious outburst of passion born under the pain of great trials. Job must put more worship in his prayers. Who will deny the charge? Who stands not guilty with Job of this sin?

EIGHTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Elihu's Intervention—c. Chastisement vs. Punishment.

Job 36.

Elihu, hailing himself as God's spokesman and having a "comprehensive survey of the universe" is not yet done with Job. He has still more to say. He speaks in an authoritative tone; his words are not false. He begs for more forbearance with Job who has kept silence, since he wishes to vindicate the righteousness of his Maker (1-4).

Starting with the divine perfections—His power and wisdom, Elihu shows that the Lord is not only all-knowing, but also all-powerful to do what He wishes to do. This great wise Being, does not despise any except for righteous causes.

Mankind is divided into two classes. The wicked, forming one class, are cut off; their life will not be preserved. The righteous form the other class, upon whom the Almighty descends, with pleasing eyes, to exalt them to high, royal honors, which shall be eternal possessions.

But, suppose facts oppose these assumptions and one find the righteous in fetters and cords, in agony and afflictions, how then? The explanation is near. They are not God forsaken; nay, God does not leave or forsake His own. But they have forsaken God and in their pride and arrogance, have fallen from the proper faith, as later the apostle Peter experienced. The divine visita-

tion is a reminder of their sins. It is the hand of love that strikes the blow to show them their sins. They are taught in God's disciplinary school and there are admonished to return to God and forsake their sins (5-10). "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Jehovah" (Ps. 94:12). "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6). "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" Rev. 3:19).

If they return penitently and adhere to the service of God, they shall be richly rewarded. Prosperity shall continue to be with them and pleasantness shall follow their life's course. If they refuse to return, destruction and doom is their only outlook. They shall have no saving knowledge. Their heart is closed to God. They will not seek his face. The sword will devour them. They shall fail to reach the full of life. They shall die in their youth and be reckoned with the outcasts of the congregation. They shall fall by their own acts. They dig their own graves. They set their own doom. "He delivereth the afflicted by their affliction" (11-15).

Coming now to Job, Elihu says, that God wanted to lead the sufferer out of his distress into abundance. Or as Peake thinks probable that God "allureth him", thereby showing not what God would have done, but what he is doing, and he translates verse 16: "Yea, He allured thee" (Job, p. 300). In either case, God is, or would bring Job to peace and prosperity. If Job will only see this, and return to God! His deeds, however, prove that Job does not do it. If he holds on his way, judgment and justice await him. There is no other alternative for him (16, 17).

Elihu, therefore, warns Job. He should not continue rebellious against God, neither should he despise his suffering which is laid upon him as a ransom, to bring him to true happiness and peace. Nothing else will bring

Job into a broad place. His complaint availeth not; his strength cannot. "O Job, so it is", we hear him plead with him. "Desire not the night of destruction, i. e. the judgment of God, who taketh even nations away and they are not able to escape". "Beware, beware! Turn not to evil, as it seemeth thou hast, urged by thy affliction". It is a friendly warning, which comes to Job (16-21).

Job is admonished to look away from himself and behold the majestic power and wisdom of God, of which Elihu is especially fond. How lofty, He is in His power! How wise, is He! Who can be compared with Him! He is subject to no one; He owes no man an answer. Who, could accuse Him of unrighteous dealings! Job is called upon to magnify, instead of criticise the works of God, as men have done in the song (22-24).

The admonition to magnify the works of God is well founded. How great He is! He is incomprehensible. His years are infinitude. Behold Him in nature's operations! From yonder great blue deep, He draws the drops of water by the rays of the sun and distributeth it later in abundant showers to cause the barren places to become fruitful. Yea, watch the clouds; how they spread about us like a ceiling and hide from view the upper stories, and suddenly burst upon mankind, by the clash of lightning and the noise of thunder! Behold Him in exalted majesty, undimmed by sin or inefficiency. 'About Him there is no darkness. He spreadeth His light about Him. So exalted'. Yet also, is His power displayed, even unto the bottom of the sea, where man cannot come. All these are His agencies in the moral government of the universe, "supplying rain in abundance to fertilize the earth and providing food for man; or, withholding it, to visit guilty man with drought and famine;He puts the light as a covering over the

palms of His hands and gives it a commission against the enemy'' (Cowles, 194).

Chastisement and judgment are here distinctly unfolded. The former as disciplinary training to the erring righteous, who penitently return; the latter, upon the ungodly, as deserts upon their wicked deeds. Tho both thoughts have hitherto been hinted at, it remained for Elihu to give to each its proper value. The tone is entreating; the pleading, earnest. The door of hope is swung wide open to Job. The greatness of God as seen in the storm seems preparatory to the great storm, which finally overwhelms Job.

EIGHTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Elihu's Intervention—f. Bowing to the Great God.

Job 37.

The thunder-storm which concluded C. 36 is carried over into this chapter. The new chapter continues an unfinished thought. Some think it probable that an actual storm came up, while Elihu was speaking (Renkema, p. 258). The new scene animates Elihu's spirit and inspires his address with a marvelous display of the thunder-storm. The flashes of lightning as they meet and shake the earth are looked upon as the voice of God. The whole heaven is full of fire; the whole earth ablaze to its distant outskirts. The thundering is God Himself speaking. What powers are displayed! What majesty revealed! Who can comprehend His marvelous deeds? Let the whole earth stand in awe of Him and tremble with Elihu (1-5).

Snow and ice are also considered to prove the greatness of God. They are His obedient servants. He need but speak, and they go on their commanded mission. Man is helpless over against these elements. His hand is sealed. The farmer's work is at a standstill when these come. Winter stops the labor of the soil. This change of season is to show man his dependency, and God's sovereignty. Not only is work suspended, but even the beasts hide in their coverts and they remain in their dens. "The storm comes from the chamber, the cold

from its storehouse and ice is formed by His breath'' (Peake, Job, p. 303). The hoary frost is by His breath; it captures the waters and converts them to ice (6-10).

Also the clouds are God's ministers. They go at His bidding and carry out His mission. Then they come as servants of kindness, bringing fertility, and causing the deserts to become covered with a carpet of green; now, they come as servants of correction or destruction, working havoc with man and beast (11-13).

The majesty and power being fully displayed, the youthful orator turns his thoughts to Job. He admonishes the afflicted patriarch to take time to consider. O, what wisdom God displays in controlling these powerful elements! How superior to the thoughts of man! Does Job know how the clouds are laden with moisture; how the light of the clouds shine; how the clouds unsupported poise in the heavens? Was he God's right hand and counsellor? Has he any part in bringing the warmth upon His garments? Is Job not passive in the framing and making of these great things? Is he competent to spread out with God, the sky (14-18).

Overwhelmed by the greatness of God, as the heavens declare His glory (cf. Ps. 19), Elihu wishes to know how any can contend with such an exalted Being. Can Job do it? How can man, frail and darkened by sin, correct Him or contend with Him? Would that Job's desire to meet God might be fulfilled! Would it not lead to doom and destruction (19-20)?

The storm seems to be abating; the wind drives the clouds; the sky is clearing. The northern splendor shines like glittering gold, after the clouds have disappeared. If man cannot behold its beauty, how can he, His terrible majesty? God is too much for man. He cannot be found out. His essence is beyond his comprehension. But of this he may be assured that God's justice and

righteousness are always executed, and never will He allow His greatness to be used to crush the afflicted (cf. Renkema, 261). Hence men will, and do fear Him. But they who live in their conceitedness without God are not acceptable with Him (21-24).

The friends had brought Job in the mire. Elihu has opened the way of faith to him. He has shown him, that tho it is true that there is suffering because of sin, it is equally true that not all suffering can be attributed to personal sin. There is a suffering among men which is not a result of wickedness; it is for the uplift of God's people. The wicked are truly punished for their sins; the righteous chastised. What a relief to all those who suffer like Job!

NINTH CHAPTER.

The Jehovah Speeches.

- a. Nine Illustrations from natural Phenomena, 38:1-38.
- b. Ten Illustrations from the Animal World, 38:39-39:30.
- c. Job overcome; higher visions, 40:1-42:6.

“Shall he that cavilleth contend with the Almighty?”
Jehovah (40: 2).

“I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eye seeth thee:
Wherefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes”
(Job (42: 5, 6).

NINTH CHAPTER.

Jehovah Speeches.

Shall mortal man contend with God?

a. Nine Illustrations from Natural Phenomena.

Job 38: 1-38.

A new character enters upon the scene, to set Job aright. What men were unable to do, Jehovah the God of love does. The words of the friends had irritated the afflicted man of Uz, and he had put them to silence. Elihu had given consolation and Job has found no words to reply, altho he was not ready to submit to the theory of Elihu. And now, as befitting "when the Almighty is the speaker, the poet takes his highest flights" (Peake, Job, 312).

Hitherto the term God had been used, giving us conform to His name, His excellency and power. Now Jehovah speaks, to bear witness to the fact that the God of mercy, the God of the covenant would show His mercy unto His afflicted child.

In a series of statements, cast mostly in the form of questions, the loving God, shows His greatness in dispensing His mercy and helps to unmask the selfishness of the suffering patriarch, and aids to lead him into a higher light.

The Elihu speeches, especially chapters 36, 37, had admirably led up to this part of the wonderful poem, even tho Peake, et al. maintain that chapter 38 should follow chapter 36. God's voice had been heard in the roaring of thunder. Nothing but atmospheric phenomena had been discerned. Now, however, Jehovah speaks in an audible tone, not in a gentle breeze as to Elijah (I K. 19: 11-12), but in a storm.

“Jehovah even when condescending to speak with men, must veil Himself in the storm-cloud, in which He descends and approaches the earth. Even, when He is nearest to us, clouds and darkness are round about Him. His revelation of Himself to Job, at least, was partly to rebuke him, for he had sinned against His majesty, and He veils Himself in terrors” (Davidson, Job, p. 261).

Jehovah's appearance does not at once liberate the suffering servant. The friends had led him thru deep paths, yet in his best moments his faith had conquered his own sentiments. Yet Job had not been free from sin. He had charged the Almighty with prejudice and doubted his moral government. Job must suffer until he is conquered; until he finds himself seeking pardon, instead of redress. In the highest revelation his conceptions change and finding a greater vision, his soul enters into rest. He had declared that if God would only speak, he would stand acquitted (cl. 23: 5; 13: 3).

When seeing his cherished hope realized, Job finds himself not as easily vindicated as he had anticipated. Pressed by pain and by the false accusation of the friends, he had said things which were subject to reproof, and when he meets God these must be corrected. He had darkened “counsel” by criticising the moral government, and “spoken words without understanding”. He is, therefore, called to account. The best in him may speak, if it is able to do so. God urges him to

prepare for the contest. He commands him to gird up his loins like a man. God challenges him, because he had thought to be able to win by debate (Calvin):

“For I will demand of thee,
And declare thou unto me” (38:1-3).

God does not take Job to the invisible, unseen, spiritual world, but to things which his natural eye may see or understand at least to a large extent; at the same time revealing its deep mysteries and laying bare the underlying wisdom, majesty, power and goodness of Jehovah.

1. The creation of the world is alluded to. Where was Job when its foundations were laid, its size determined, its foundations fastened, its corner stone laid? There were creatures then; the morning stars delivered the dedicatory song; the sons of God shouted for joy, but there was no man to raise his voice in honor of his Maker (38:4-7).

2. The formation of the sea, is touched upon. The description is beautiful. Continuing the question to ascertain what power was back of all these things, Job is asked to name Him, who built the walls of the sea. Was it not the Almighty, who captured the rushing streams as they gushed out of the earth and under His powerful control ordered their courses and bridled their power and shut up their contents and made their reservoirs with gates and bars to hold back and to let out? As the new born babe needs a garment, so He made for the wild seas the garment and swaddling band. The clouds are the former; thick clouds of darkness the latter. What a majestic picture! How great is the deep! Was it not God who set its hedges and stayed its foaming waves (38:8-11)?

3. The dawn: Job is asked whether he had any control over the break of day, as it breaks forth along the

whole horizon, acting as a moral agent by rushing the wicked from their hiding places, leaving its firm impression, as the clay pressed under the seal; making all things stand forth in its verdure as a garment; breaking the dens of the wicked whose "light" is darkness; and breaking the arm used for evil intent (38:12-15).

4. The netherworld: The deep is looked into, the springs of the ocean are entered, the recesses of the sea traversed, but not by Job. Deeper still, Jehovah leads His servant, and asks what he knows of death and its gates and of the shadow of the earth. All this must be too deep for Job. It is beyond his apprehension (38:16, 17).

5. The surface of the earth: Light and darkness are the best measures by which to measure its breadth. Where is their boundaries? Has Job had access to these? Has Job learned the local habitation of light and darkness and led them to their homes? Yes, (ironically of course), Job must know, for he was then born and his head is crowned with age. It proved clearly the "folly of Job's daring assumption" (38:18-21).

6. Snow and ice: They are thought of as treasures laid up, and accessible to the Almighty as instruments of war to cause a halt in the fight and a disaster in the enemy's camp. Did Job ever soar so high as to see these hidden forces by which God is able to destroy a large army, since they are considered as ministers of the divine vengeance (Ex. 9:18-29; Josh. 10:11; Ps. 18:12, 13; 78:47, 48; 105:32; Isa. 30:30; 32:19; Ez. 13:11; Hag. 2:17; Rev. 7:7; 11:19; 16:21), (38:22, 23).

7. Job is now asked, whether he can explain the workings of God in nature; e. g. how light is distributed, and the wind managed. Who has cleft the rocks, dug the gullies, made the depressions where the wady is? Who hath paved the way of space for the course of light-

ning? Who brings rain upon the uninhabited districts and fertility to the waste places? To what source do rain and hail and ice owe their existence? To all these questions, Job must answer: "Not I" (38: 24-33).

9. Clouds and storms: Can Job dictate to the clouds and bring them to obey his orders? Will they bring water at his bidding? Has he power to call the lightning at his will? What person among mortals possesses such powers, and what mind such intelligence? Who can empty the bottles of heaven or number the clouds? Can Job? Ah, nay, he cannot (38: 34-38).

NINTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Jehovah Speeches.

b. Ten Illustrations from the Animal World.

Job 38: 39-39: 30.

Illustrations drawn from the variety of God's providence over the animal world.

Turning from the greatness of God in inanimate nature, the author considers the wild roaming animals. "The strain of discourse passes from the inanimate creation to the animate; from the heavenly bodies and atmospheric agencies to beasts of field, and forest, of land and water; to treat of their instincts and capabilities, and of the provision which their great Creator has made for their subsistence and well-being. This discourse has less sublimity and grandeur than the preceding. Yet carefully considered, it is scarcely less rich in displaying the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator" (Cowles, p. 207).

The following ten cases are mentioned: 1. lion; 2. raven; 3. wild-goat; 4. hinds; 5. wild ass; 6. wild ox; 7. the ostrich; 8. war-horse; 9. the hawk, and 10. the eagle.

1. Who tends the king of the forest with her young—the lioness and her cubs? Does Job traverse the plains in search of their food, while they lie waiting in their den? "Far from it; he would sooner slay the robber of the herd, than drive its prey into its clutches". The

lion with its strength and vigility is nevertheless dependent upon God's kind providence (38:39, 40).

2. The insignificant raven, who takes care of it, and its young that cry for food? Let the Psalmist answer: "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry" (Ps. 147:9). Hear the Master answer: "Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them; of how much more value are ye than the birds" (38:41).

Perhaps it was consolation to the suffering patriarch to learn that if God would answer the cry of the young ravens, he would also hear his voice.

3 and 4. The goats and hinds are jointly considered. Their course of life is beyond the access of Job. They bring forth, and rid themselves hastily of their young, which are robust and strong and soon able to take care of themselves. These wild creatures which live in the rocks, where food is scarce are provided for by the Almighty (39:1-4)

5. The wild ass is contrasted with the tame one. The former is unbound by halters and ropes; he lives not in the stalls or pastures; but in the barren wilderness and by the salt land. He scorneth the tumult of the city and the shoutings of the driver, to which his tame brother is subject. Who giveth him this great liberty, and maketh provision for him in these barren places, if not the Lord (39:5-8)?

6. The wild ox as contrasted with the domestic ox, is unwilling to pull, altho he has the strength; he is not at home at the crib, for he cannot understand its usefulness. If harnessed, he will not follow the furrow, nor work in the field. He cannot be trusted like the tame one. No one will put him to his work, for it is known beforehand that his service will not be trusted. Job

must learn that thus God has ordained contrasts, the why and wherefore, remaining a mystery to man (39:9-12).

7. The ostrich has wings and pinions of unusual swiftness and is also endowed with feathers which would make brooding very easy and good. Yet she lays her eggs in the dust, and leaves them to their own fate where accidentally the foot of man or the trample of wild beast may crush them. She is void of maternal love and care. God has not given her this instinct, possessed by nearly all kinds of animals, yet she has swiftness of feet, to scorn the horse and she can only be overcome by driving her against the wind.

This striking passage shows to Job the diversity of God's power who sees fit "to create a bird wonderfully endowed with swiftness, to escape her enemies, yet so foolish as to leave her young at the mercy of every hostile foot" (Genung, p. 334), (39:13-18).

8. Ready for battle, the war-horse, with his long mane and limber muscles, so that he resembles the locusts, is next described. The glory of his snorting is terrible. He is restless, determined to go on, has no fear of arms or sword. Upon his back rideth the soldier, arrayed with implements of war, which excites him. The war-cry, is his joy. He raiseth his head; his tail projects; his mane fans the air. The trumpet makes him dance; he is ready for battle. It is a beautiful description of the Arabian war-horse. Who has given such instincts to the horse, Job or God (39:19-25)?

9. The hawk by natural instinct, like the duck and goose, seeks his home in milder climate before the cold sets in. Job has no part in the wisdom with which the hawk is endowed (39:26).

10. The eagle flieth heights beyond the reach of man. He buildeth his nest upon dizzy crags and maketh his home beyond the reach of man. From thence his view

is unobstructed and he can watch the battle field below and blood, his chief delight. Even the young by natural instinct suck up blood. Who giveth these fowls their instinct of home and food? Did Job?

What reason was there, therefore, for Job to adjudge God of unkindness, who was so compassionate to the inferior creatures, and took such a tender care of them; or to boast of himself, and his own good deeds before God, which were nothing to the divine mercies (el. Matt. Henry, opening of C. 39).

NINTH CHAPTER (Continued).

Jehovah Speeches.

c. Job Overcome; the Higher Visions.

Job 40-42: 6.

To bring the matter to an issue, before proceeding any further, Jehovah, calls Job to account. After giving some nineteen illustrations from the atmospherical and terrestrial phenomena and from the animal world to show Job his ignorance of the providence of God over natural things, "he clinches the nail with one demand more, which stands by itself here as the application of the whole. It would seem, God paused a while as Elihu had done, to give Job time to reply, or to deliberate on what God had said; but, Job was in such confusion, that he remained silent and therefore, God here put him upon replying" (Matth. Henry, *in loco*).

Job is forced to come forth from his place of retreat, altho hushed to silence by a guilty conscience, and unable to meet Jehovah in His powerful display of His kindness. Job must answer. Having longed for an interview with God, he should now do, as he claimed he would.

But, since Job had made that statement, things had changed in his mind. Thinking to win by the magnitude of his wisdom, as he had once won out over his friends, he cannot now. Elihu had paved the way. Job had not refuted Elihu, altho he had been requested to do so. A greater conception of God had caused him to remain silent. He had come to see thru new eyes. But Jehovah

will not let the matter pass by unnoticed. When He speaks, who can keep silent (40: 1, 2)?

Job has already learned the lesson in part. He comes forth no more with words, displaying mighty deeds and powerful words. He rests his case with God, and hopes for mercy. He humbly confesses his inferiority to God, and finds no words to form an adequate answer. He knows too well, that the voice of God has spoken truth. Truth is a stubborn thing. Job had learned it. He cannot now in the presence of the Almighty, speak. Hence, he is resolved to lay his hand upon his mouth. He humbly bows before the Father's love (40: 3-5).

Jehovah's Second Discourse (40: 6-42: 6).

"The second discourse of Jehovah (40: 6-42: 6) is intended to supply what is still lacking, as to this point, to constrain Job fully to recognize the justice of God in all that He does, and in this way to vanquish, the last remainder of pride and presumption in his heart. It accomplishes this end by a twofold method. First, by the deductive method, of severely censuring the doubt which Job had uttered as to the divine justice; and by vindicating God's sole and exclusive claim to the power requisite for exercising sovereignty over the universe (40: 6-14). Next by the indirect method of attacking his pride, thru a lengthened description of two proud monster-beasts, mighty creations of God's hand, which after all the amazing wonder which their gigantic power calls forth, are nevertheless only instruments in the hand of the Almighty and must submit, if not to the will of man, at least to the will of God, who crushes all tyrannous pride" (40: 15-41: 26--cl. Lange-Schaff, p. 618).

Job is rebuked by Jehovah because of his silence. His presumption that God did him injustice is laid bare as a falsehood. God challenges Job again, similar to what

He did in the first speech. Out of the whirlwind He yet speaks, thereby showing His majesty and divine veiling. He calls him once more to answer Him and requests him to prepare for the conflict. There must be a reply this time, whether Job wishes to give one or not. Job must meet his Maker. He must exonerate God's justice, which he had subjected to criticism. He must declare the justice of God, which altho implied in His first speech (38: 13-15), yet had not been explicitly stated.

Will Job dare to nullify the divine justice and condemn the divine bar to liberate himself? Has he an arm equal to that of the Almighty, and can he speak as the voice of God (6-9)?

If so, Jehovah ironically proceeds, Job must have divine attributes, and claim for himself, divine power. He must put on dignity and honor, majesty and power. The inconceivable and impossible, must take place. Job must be like God. Then he can do as he wishes; then he is able to allow his powers to flow and abase the proud and stamp out the wicked. If Job can do these things, Jehovah will vindicate him and Job will be able to stand on his own righteousness. But, this is the impossible. Job's right cannot save him (10-14).

To show Job, that his own righteousness cannot save him and to convince him that he is incompetent to rule over men and so vindicate his self-righteousness, Jehovah shows the great powerful monster, "Behemoth" (marginal reading, hippopotamus). If Job had power over the universe and over man, let him show his power over nature. Behold this monster, whatever it may have been (mammoth, rhinoceros, hippopotamus), which laughs at the action of men. Yet it is created as well as Job is. This monster eats grass like an ox; he is a "graminivorous", with strength in his loins, muscles in his belly, with a heavy tail, with powerfully built sinews

knit together, with monstrous limbs and powerful bones, the king of the animal creation. God has endowed him with his weapon, wherewith he claims his prey. He roams the mountains, sheltereth beneath the trees, trembleth not for floods. Indeed a giant! How can any man take him, when he is watching or pierce his nostrils or entrap him in a snare? It is an impossibility. The animal is beyond Job's power (40: 15-24).

The other monster to which reference is made, is called "Leviathan" (crocodile, marginal reading). Like the Behemoth, this monster is foreign to Palestine. Perhaps his original home was Egypt. He is also a giant. Can he be caught by hook, or net, or spear? Let Job try and be convinced of his powers. This giant is not persuaded by words, or tamed like a bird or bound like a servant, or sold on the market, nor shot thru with arrows, nor pierced with harpoons. He who meets him in battle, will never be able to try it again. It will be the last of him. He is too much for the power of man. He who attacks him does so, foolishly. None dare stir him up, nor can any stand before him. "If none dare to stir up this creature which God has made, who will stand before God who created him, or venture to contend with him. . . . As none dare to contend with God, so none have any ground of contention with Him. None hath given aught to God, so as to have a claim against Him, for all this under the heavens are His" (Davidson, Job, p. 282). It is a futile attempt to strive with such a Being. Especially, because God is never guilty; because He is under obligations to none. Job had complained that his right had been inverted, but what right did Job have over against Jehovah? Did He not give all? Is not everything dependent upon Him? The application falls in the middle of the speech, as appeared before in one of the other addresses (C. 31: 35-37). Jehovah does it so pow-

erfully that it is not necessary to do it at the end any more (cf. Renkema, p. 288) (41:1-11).

The powerful monster is fully described, and a corresponding animal has been hard to find. His frame and strength are alluded to. His members are described with great care. His face is first of all described. Who can uncover his outer garment (marginal rendering, v. 13), i. e. the part which covers the teeth and laps over? What man dare follow the example of some little birds which go in the mouth and gather insects out of it (cf. Schaff-Lange, p. 823)? Who can open the doors of his face, i. e. his mouth? Everybody has respect for his teeth and people stand at a distance (12-14).

Secondly, the strength of his scales are weighed. It is claimed that he has seventeen rows. These are his shield. They are held as if they were riveted together (15-17).

Thirdly, the power of his breath is described. "The animal is said to inflate itself, as it lies basking in the sun and then force the heated breath thru its nostrils, which in the sun appears as a stream of light" (Davidson, Job, p. 284), (18-21).

Fourthly, his muscles are spoken of. They are well developed, hard as a stone, firmly built, so that he is a terror to everyone. He is so built, that men fear him. Even the most courageous takes to his heels at his approach. Why? because no sword, nor spear, nor dart, nor point-shaft, can reach him. Iron is warded off by his scales; brass is like rotten wood; he minds not the arrow and the sling makes no impression. Clubs are as chaff and the javelin has no effect upon him. No human weapon can pierce his armor (22-29).

Fifthly, his lower part is described. It is compared with sharp pot-sherds, so that he leaves "his foot prints" upon the mire as he moves along (30).

Sixtly, his power displayed in the water, is shown. He leaves his traces in the sea. Foam and scum follow his trail. Great sea-monster, he fearless, feared by all (31-34)!

After such a powerful description of the forces of God and of His love, Job comes to insight of the great secrets of life. Jehovah has overwhelmed him. His troubled soul, is now anxious to come into closer union with Jehovah. Job comes to better things. Without any hope of reward, the sufferer bows before the greater rule and goodness. He sees that the Lord can do all things, and he confesses that His purpose is the determinating factor of man's life. The sovereignty of God, stands unchallenged. Job humbly worships it. Come what may, God's will stands supreme, to whom every sufferer must submit.

He now sees how wrongly he has accused God. He now confesses that he has passed judgment without knowing its issues. He now prays, just as Saul of Tarsus, when en-route to Damascus, where he met Jesus, whom he persecuted. New visions are his delight. New thoughts have been born in his heart. A new world view has dawned upon him. He recognizes things which he had never seen before.

And now he comes, deeply humbled. No more concerned with God's providence. He knows it must be good; yea it is good. He comes now with a burdened heart and a contrite spirit. He repents in dust and ashes. Not hidden in his own bosom, but in the bosom of a Father's love, Job finds rest. Job sees a Father's heart in which he enters into rest. Viewed from the other side, from God's side, Job now understands, and his troubles wane, like the night at the break of day. He enters upon a new era. He lives in a higher life. He sees a greater God. He entertains better conceptions of God and man.

JOB'S RESTORATION.

Epilogue.

42: 7-17.

Job being corrected, the sublime majesty disappears. The friends, altho silenced by Job and reproved by Elihu, must of necessity receive correction from the courts higher, than man.

Jehovah directs His instruction to Eliphaz, the Temanite, the first speaker of every cycle, and thru him to all the three friends. Jehovah sides in with Elihu, and proclaims that His wrath is kindled at their behavior. They are commanded to make retribution. They must offer up for themselves a burnt offering "consisting of seven bullocks and seven rams". Job is requested to intercede in their behalf and it is promised that his action will be heard (7, 8).

Obeying the divine dictum, the offerings are brought and the restoration of the friends follows. No mention is made of Elihu. This fact must be looked upon as important. He must have been, as he hailed himself to be: God's spokesman (9).

The restoration of Job and his friends being accomplished, prosperity follows the way of Job. Society receives him again; his loved ones attend him; his friends express their condolence; his wealth becomes great; children are added to his home to bless it. One hundred forty years the patriarch is yet permitted to live. Four generations he is yet permitted to see of his own descendants. He dies being old and full of years.

SECTION III.

THE RELATIVE VALUE OF THE SOLUTIONS OFFERED.

- Chapter 10. Suffering and Saintship (Prologue).
- Chapter 11. Suffering and Sinfulness (Friends).
- Chapter 12. Suffering and Suffering (Job).
- Chapter 13. Suffering and Chastisement (Elihu).
- Chapter 14. Suffering and Surrender (Jehovah
Speeches).
- Chapter 15. Suffering and Divine Sovereignty (Whole
Book of Job).

TENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Saintship.

(Prologue.)

“Blessed is the man that
endureth temptation, for when he
has been approved (tried), he shall
receive the crown of life, which
the Lord promised to them that love
Him”.

James (1:12).

“Deliver us from evil (evil-one)”.

Jesus (Matt. 6. 13).

TENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Saintship.

(Prologue.)

With the material before us, it now seems proper to differentiate and correlate or extricate, as the case may be, the various views presented, in order to determine, if possible, the reason why good men suffer, and unfold a plan tenable, under which the great sufferer enters into rest. The task is more difficult than may be apparent. A stream has many tributaries and various sources feeding it. Beyond the thought of mankind in general and Job in particular, unseen forces are found operating upon our surroundings and lives; some of these are kind, others, unkind; some bring weal, others woe; some bring prosperity, others adversity. With these hidden forces our subject is closely allied. Furthermore, it must be remembered that many thoughts are brought to light and many facts unfolded which must be held in the background, lest too many trees hide the mountain.

Treating the material in its chronological order, we find ourselves face to face with the prologue, and consequently with Satan's theory of saintship. He maintained that Job's religion rested upon hypocrisy. The faith of the perfect and upright man of Uz is impeached at the instance of Satan, the adversary, who enters the train of the Most High, as the sons of God make obeisance to their King. His mind being arrested to Job's behavior, the adversary brings accusation against the greatest of

the sons of the East. The charge preferred is that Job is good, because he is blessed. Job is rewarded for a good conduct. He worships for selfish interests. The stream flows his way. He has no hills to climb, no obstacles to remove, no mountains to pass. His path hath been made straight and roses are strewn by the wayside. Goodness has fallen upon him, as the dew from heaven. Success crowned every effort of his. His material and domestic weal are gauges of his religious life. The more he receives the warmer his love to his God, the higher the temperature of faith. If a halt should come and the divine favors would cease to flow, his religion would disappear; it would go down as the quick-silver in a barometer on a cold wintry evening. If the wheels of his prosperity were blocked; if the current of the stream of life were reversed and heavy seas and disastrous waves strike his bark; if prosperity became adversity, weal were changed to woe, then Job would renounce his God.

Satan attributes Job's piety to the free bestowal of God's blessings. Job is religious, in so far only, as it serves himself. Hence his religion was none other but humanism; in the truest sense, hypocrisy.

This was an awful charge to make against one whom heaven had declared "perfect and upright". It was, therefore, a charge against God's own testimony. Many, therefore, rightly think, that in its last analysis not Job the righteous, but God the attestor of that righteousness is the object of attack by the pernicious fiend (cf. Bavinck in Renkema's Introduction to Job, Kuyper-Engelen Gods, J. M. P. Smith, et al.).

Satan's theory is to be tried. Job is given into his hands, evidently with a twofold intent—to test the saintship in Job, and to unmask Satan as a falsifier.

The pestiferous enemy gladdened with his opportunity, hastens to execute his extra-liberty. Helplessly

Job stands over against the gigantic foe, as he deprives Job of all his enormous possessions and of his ten children. The calamity was an awful blow to Job the Great. Yet it did not make Job an atheist, as Satan had claimed it would. On the contrary, it makes Job the hero of faith. He stands worshipping his God, amid his deep sorrow. He climbs to one of faith's highest peaks, as he cries out: "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the Name of Jehovah".

Unwilling to own defeat, Satan the Cruel, seeks permission to impair Job's health. Closer he could not come. God hedges his servant from complete destruction. But, this was as near as any care to have it. Satan chooses that awful disease which brands Job as an outcast of civilization. On yonder ash-mound, without the city walls, he sits, nursing his sores with a potsherd, a disgrace to all mankind, mocked by all who passed that way, entertaining an inevitable end.

And Job's wife, accepts Satan's theory. Prosperity gone, and affliction his lot, she urges him to curse God and die. If Satan's theory were true, Job had better follow the advice of his wife; but since Job knows it to be wrong, he does it not. The sufferer is aware of a providence which sends both good and evil, and he, therefore rightly repudiates his wife's unbelief. Job had outwitted Satan, altho he was not aware that Satan was bringing this upon him, thru God's permission. Job stood the second trial, altho, perhaps, not as firm as the first one.

The battle had been fought. Satan's word undone, instead of Job's faith. Satan has not shattered Job's religion, as he had purposed; but he did shatter his own theory. Job worshipped God, tho deprived of his great interests and afflicted with a disease, supposedly incurable. Trying to unmask Job as a hypocrite, Satan stands guilty of falsehood, before God. Come what may, Job

shows, as he later, in one of his best moments declares: "Yet shall the righteous hold on his way, And he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger" (17:9). Satan retreats, at least seemingly, since he appears no more openly upon the scene. He was defeated; Job had won out. Unbelief lost; faith triumphed. Falsehood was placed where it should be—with the devil and his train; religion was disclosed as a possession treasured far beyond personal interests or earthly treasures.

There was no other way. God's word is true. With Job's, God's integrity had been challenged. Both the righteousness of Job and of God hung in the balance. If Job was declared "perfect and upright" by God Himself, then afflictions of no type could alter it. Job stood, as do all the children of the Most High, in God. This was his stronghold; hence God did not fail him, when he needed Him most. Satan's attempt to overthrow the foundation of the righteous was futile. His theory of saintship wrong.

And this prologue tells us how even, when suffering comes in abundant ways, faith holds on its way. Nothing can sever the servant of God from the love of God. The impeachment of Job becomes the impeachment of Satan instead. Satan is unmasked as the great deceiver. "He was a murderer from the beginning", says Jesus, "and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him" (John 8:44). This charge which Jesus preferred against Satan, is fully seen in this instance. Hence, it is hard to see how modern scholars can say that the Satan is not the Satan of later times (cf. Watson, Peake, Caldwell, *Biblical World* Jan. 13, p. 32, et al. in loco). It is true, some trace these sources to the Arabic jinn, the Babylonian Tiamat (the dragon-monster of the abyss), the demons of Persia, the evil spirits of Egypt, in short the evil spirits of folklore, and maintain that since the

article is here used (the Satan), that the personality of Satan was only a common name. But the article is sometimes used with an appellative (cl. Harper, Heb. Syntax, p. 21) and why not here?

But be that as it may, Satan is the adversary. This is the meaning of the word; one who opposes. In its general terminology, even the angel of Jehovah carries this name, as he opposes Baalim in his futile attempt to oppose Israel (Num. 22: 22). The description given here of Satan, however, corresponds to the N. T. description, and one cannot help, but feel inclined to make it a proper name (cl. Davis, B. D., art. Satan for a comparative study). That Satan is only referred to in a few texts in the O. T. need not cause surprise. The noise of battle is most marked when two opposing armies meet. The closer one moves on to Golgotha, the greater, the role Satan plays (cl. Kuyper, *De Engelen Gods*, p. 208).

It is a fact that Satan does the evil and that God permits it. He is not co-equal, nor co-existent with God, but subordinate. Davidson calls him "the minister of God's providence". And Green says: "It is Satan actually exhibited in the attitude of a servant of God and made subservient to the discipline and training of His people".

Interesting inferences and deductions can be made from this incident. God's providence rules both the good and evil. Satan is dependent of, not co-ordinate with God. He is the archenemy of God and His people. He is man's chief adversary. As Milton puts it, when he makes Satan say:

"To do ought good, never will be our task,
But ever to do ill, our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high Will
Whom we resist."

Majestic and sublime, the sovereignty of God is described. Heaven (the sons of God), earth (Job) and hell (Satan) bow before His adorable Majesty. And, Satan, what a force of evil! And faith, what a battle! Yet, how true to life!

Here then is a problem solved. Satan's theory that there is no disinterested goodness, falls flat. Job shows the world for all time, that faith is not conditioned upon outward prosperity. Come what may, the darkest moments are followed by the greatest light. Perhaps Job had never given such expressions of faith before. It is only when we are tried, that we know our own strength. It is only by test that we know the true strength of our faith. Times of persecution have always given the most purified church and the loftiest expressions of union to God.

True religion stands above every personal interest. The interest of God, beyond any personal comfort. The glory of God stands above the glory of man. Job's behavior has shown to all ages, that prosperity does not necessarily mean religion. In adversities faith has shown its highest peaks. Therefore, "we glory in tribulations" (Rom. 5:3), and are "patient in tribulation" (Rom. 12:12), (A. V.).

Loyalty to God, is man's first duty. It is the chief end of the law. "This is the great and first Commandment" (Matt. 22:38), (R. V.). "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matth. 6:33), (A. V.). This is what Job teaches us. His sufferings do not deter him in his course; "the vain efforts of Satan to induce the patriarch to sin, resulted in disciplining his character and maturing his faith in God" (Davis). Holding on, is the key-note. It is no trick to play pilot when the sea is calm, but it is when the storm rages, and the billows

roll and the foaming scum endanger the ship. It is easy to play the role of a Christian, when sunshine falls beautifully upon our pathway; but to have faith, when as it seems heaven is concealed from view, when the mists of doubt and unbelief hover low over us, when adversity comes to be our lot, then to hold on our ordained way, that is faith. That is just what Satan said was impossible; but faith shows that it is possible. Suffering for the child of God is, as Moulton has said, "a test of saintship, made the more severe, as the saintship is stronger to endure".

For Job, such a test was harder, since he had not the revelation which we are permitted to enjoy. We profit by his experience. For him, there was only one answer to the problem. God is absolute sovereign and it is for him to accept not only good, but also evil from His hand.

For us, the experience of Job is of great value. We see Satan our arch-foe attempting to undo the very foundations of the righteous, if he but could. Job resisted faithfully the assault. Men will believe and do believe in God and hold to Him irrespective of external reward. Knowing Job's experience and seeing his faith, we, who behold thru a higher revelation which has come to us in Jesus Christ, should put ourselves in readiness for meeting the giant-foe. Let the whole armor of faith be put on. Our religious motives must ever and anon stand for the glory of God. Piety must stand above sufferings; virtue above rewards. And in the dark hours when temptations befall us, let us follow the man of Uz, in showing a faith firm and strong, more desired than earthly treasures or parental ties or marital love.

ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Sinfulness.

**Theory of the
Friends.**

“Brutus hath riv’d my heart:
A friend should bear his friends infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are”.

Shakespeare.

ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Sinfulness.

Theory of Friends.

Unable to pierce Job's heart with his venomous darts and so disjoin faith in God by willful disguise and terrific blows, Satan, retorts to seemingly less drastic, tho in reality quite harsh methods. Job had, with divine aid, warded off successfully that false accusation, that mercenary motives prompted his religious activities. Powerfully, the enemy had attempted to blackmail him as a hypocrite; amazingly, Job had silenced him. Job worshipped better, spoke firmer, exercised faith stronger, after the assault.

What a fixed faith in God came forth, when Job was tried! How he clung to God, tho deeply mourning his huge possessions and loving children! What a solace and inspiration the temptations and faith of Job has been to the afflicted and suffering world in which we live! Dearer than earthly treasures, parental affection and marital love had been Job's faith. How it reminds of the saying of Jesus: "He that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me" (Matth. 10: 37b, 38). Dearer than his children and his cross, had been the Almighty, whose service he sought, whose will he obeyed, whose providence he accepted.

Not content in reducing Job to such deep humiliations, Satan seeks to unlink the tie that bound him to God by a theory in vogue in Job's time. Satan uses every available method, seeking whom he may devour. He had successfully gained entrance into Job's wife's heart. Yet unsuccessfully dethroned the Master. He now seeks it by claiming the friends as his champion, tho indirectly. The theory which the friends uphold, worked exactly in the way Satan wished to have it done.

Unmasked as a pretender, as a liar, Satan makes no pretence to seek divine favors, but goes on his secret course, using the powers available, if possible to crush Job's faith. Now he works thru the three friends, who had come to see Job.

Hailing from three different places, the friends upon hearing of Job's calamity, mutually agree to calm the beating heart and console the suffering spirit of their friend Job. With splendid motives and good intent, they hasten to the deserted habitation without the city gate, and place themselves at a distance of Job. Old men they were; well meaning; pious men; religious men; friends they were. If they had only been enemies; if they had only been irreligious! It would not have been so hard.

The friends hail from one school of thinking. They have a common theory to present; hope a common hope; speak a common course of argument; pass a common judgment upon him, whom they hail as their friend; once the greatest of all the sons of the East.

The friends come and set themselves at a distance. Seven long days, and yet no word to say; no comfort to utter; no consolation to give. Why had they come, if not to cheer and greet, to love and be loved? Why had they changed their purpose? Why did they not invert their mission? Ah, they are Satan's tools to aid him to undo faith, if it were possible. Friends, they purport to be;

enemies they are. That silence was enough to break any man's heart. If they had only staid home! Wise counsellors, they are; a monopoly of wisdom they possess, as Job well says when he ironically attacks them.

Are we surprised, that Job writhing in pain and bleeding at heart, breaks the groans with a passionate outburst, cursing the day of his birth and the night of conception, preferring death to life? What is life to Job, when his most intimate friends will not speak, whose presence adds "a free aggravation to Job's intolerable woe" (Green, p. 112)? Yet, tho Job's cursing of his birth-day is apparent, he does not renounce God, as Satan was hoping to hear him do.

When Job speaks in agony and affliction, the friends are ready to speak. Filled with a preconceived theory, that calamity and adversity were manifesto of sin, a theory current in the Orient (cf. Hoekstra, p. 2), they are ready, not to console, but to pass judgment. They will debate with Job at this hour and accept the affirmative side of the proposition: Resolved, that Job is suffering because he is guilty of some great crime. Just think of it, debate with a **friend** about such a theme, when they have known him, and trusted him and seen his ways among men, and known him as a great and good man (cf. C. 4)! **Debate, with a dying friend**, since Job's illness was, according to current belief, incurable! What pastor would thus shepherd his sheep, in the last moment, not to say anything about a wolf! The poet may sing:

"O friendship! of all things the
Most rare, and therefore most rare, because most
Excellent; whose comforts in misery
Are always sweet, and whose counsels in
Prosperity are ever fortunate."

But for Job, friendship brings misery, pain, heartache, rebellion.

The friends are not content with one cycle, but keep it up until three cycles are passed (except Zophar, who disappears at the end of the second). They keep it up, until the afflicted servant of God overthrows their arguments and silences them to speak no more, because they have no more to say.

Eliphaz takes the initiative. Bildad follows, Zophar closes the cycles; Job replying to every one after each has spoken.

Each cycle becomes more intense, with each address the breach becomes wider, with each turn the subject becomes more heart piercing, and the warmth increases as the turns multiply, until Job is openly accused by Eliphaz of gross sins. It is as Peake says: "They deal gently with him at first, but with each cycle of speeches, the debate grows more and more embittered" (Suffering in the O. T., p. 88).

Trying to decipher the enigma of life, and harmonizing the suffering of a righteous person with the providence of God, upon a death-bed! The word picture and scene and character presentation are graphic, at times beautiful, at times grand.

The importance of the debate cannot be estimated too highly. About one-half of the Book of Job is devoted to this great debate.

Eliphaz bases his authority upon a vision; Bildad, upon tradition; Zophar, upon consensus of opinion. Harper used to call Eliphaz a prophet, Bildad a sage, and Zophar a layman.

The friends in the debate cannot speak as Job. They have not his faith, nor his experience. They have not drunk the bitter cup, nor faced death as Job does now. They have a theory as old as the patriarchs, around

which superstition clusters belief even to this day. It is a theory, that's what it is. It is a theory of life, void of experimental knowledge, picked up by the way-side and slung at random at those in affliction and distress.

It must be admitted, that it is exactly the cycles of speeches which brings out fully what the friends believe. It is these, taken collectively upon which we form our opinion of the friends.

In the first cycle of the debate, the friends uphold loftily the perfections of God: Eliphaz, His purity; Bildad, His justice; Zophar, His wisdom (so Harper, in unpublished lectures; Peake, *Job*, p. 10). But Job, wise as he was, can excel the friends in unfolding these attributes of the divine Essence. The friends, have nothing, however, but a one-sided God; no Father of kindness in the sense as the Jehovah speeches give it. They argue a priori that Job must be guilty of some great evil, without designating what that evil-deed is. Suffering is a manifesto of God's wrath, hence the conclusion that Job is sinful. Some heinous crime must have been committed by the suffering patriarch. Job is guilty before this majestic, All-wise Being. Hence, all three urge a return unto God.

In the second cycle, the friends take a common ground, and argue from the basis that the evil-doers are speedily cut off. The picture of the sinner's destiny is vividly set up—its awfulness and terribleness is enough to frighten anybody. The speeches are animated by Job's rebellious attitude. They cut deep into the wounded heart. They leave the sufferer without hope. Doom, devastation and judgment is all that is presented.

In the third cycle of speeches, Eliphaz and Bildad appear alone with Job. The subject becomes more specific. Eliphaz, tho closing tenderly and exhorting for a return, brings five charges against Job, every one of which is

based upon assumption. He classifies Job with the wicked rich of his day, and ascribes their sins to him. His speech terminates with a beautiful picture of bliss and restoration, if Job will but return. Bildad has not much to add. He simply compares the greatness of God to the inferiority of man and ends rather hastily and abruptly.

It is not easy to discriminate in these speeches, the exact position. Truth and error are so diffusedly mingled, that only careful study can detect the course of argument. It is, however, clear that the friends use the deductive method. They see a pure, just and wise God ruling all things. They see Job's sufferings. Hence they conclude that, since God's rule is perfect, therefore Job must suffer as an evil-doer. Consciously or unconsciously, Job must be guilty of some crime, for which he and his children suffer.

The friends were right in declaring the perfections of God. Let no man take aught from these.

The friends were right in declaring the sovereignty of God. The fact is beyond controversy.

The friends were right in declaring that God punishes sin. The wages of sin is death. "The way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15b). "The end of the wicked shall be cut off" (Ps. 37:38b).

The friends were right in maintaining that God's favor is conditioned upon true character. "Wait for Jehovah, and keep His way; And He will exalt thee, to inherit the land" (Ps. 37:34). "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; For there is a happy end to the man of peace" (Ps. 37:37a).

The friends were right in connecting sin and suffering. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ez. 18:4). Haman suffered for his misdeeds (Esther 7); David, for his sin against Uriah (II Sam. 12:7-12); the adulterer

gets his deserts (Prov. 6:26-35); Belshazzar's revelry ended in disaster (Dan. 5). Israel went to Babylon and suffered deportation for its sins (cf. all the prophets).

The friends erred in their theory of retribution. The truth that God punished sinners was applied to Job in such a way, that Job was considered an awful sinner.

The friends were wrong in upholding an orthodoxy incompatible with the world and life view of the universe.

The friends were wrong in specializing generalities. They singled out all suffering as a personal result of direct sin.

The friends were wrong in applying their theory unreservedly to Job.

The friends were wrong in catenating Job's suffering with the gentlemen's sins (if this expression is permissible) of his day.

The friends were wrong in upholding their theory with an intent to cater to the divine pleasure.

The friends were wrong in explaining Job's suffering out of his sinfulness. Job explained his sinfulness, due to his suffering.

The theory of the friends made Job's suffering a result of some sin which he had done. Suffering was to them a manifesto of sinfulness. They forget, or else do not know, that it also could be for testing saintship. They well present the attribute of God as revealing a detestation of sin; they forget, or else do not know, that it might equally be a revelation of love. The friends' conception was one-sided. They see only the wrath of God. They see only that God hates sin. They cannot see that God has also a purpose with His children, whom He loves, to whom He sends the rod of love, for whom He loveth, He chasteneth. It is this part of the moral order of the universe which they left untouched. It is this part what

Job most needed. It is this part which is the hope and consolation of all who love their Savior, which they failed to apprehend.

Consequently, Jehovah after deliberating Job, speaks against the friends. They are condemned because they have not spoken the thing that is right of God, the Most High, as did His servant Job. They have only spoken partial truth. They failed to speak of God's government over His people. They spoke merely of God's rule over sinful man; they neglected to speak of God's rule over redeemed man.

If the friends could have had their way, the world would lie hopelessly combating the afflicted righteous. The greatest of men fail to pronounce the great mercy of God. God must do this thru His servant Elihu and thru His own manifestations.

O dreadful world ready with a doom and destruction upon him, who falls into the training of faith. The theory of the friends is too often adhered to in our day. Men do not differentiate between the twofold administration of God's government. Because, floods sweep away a thousand or more in Ohio; because, brave men say: ladies and children first, when the ill-fated Titanic rushes to the deep with sixteen hundred souls; because, war befalls a city and death and destruction befalls the inhabitants; because, eighteen were killed when the tower in Siloam fell (Luke 13:4), "think ye that they were offenders above all men?" The friends, would answer: yes; Jesus, would answer: no.

There is a suffering for sin; there is likewise a suffering for saintship.

The friends were aiding Satan in his destructive ways. Unconsciously, they lend a hand to the terrible enemy. Their words went deep into the wounded sufferer's heart. Poor counsellors, they were indeed. Satan's

right hand to irritate, to isolate, to hasten Job's infidelity, if God had permitted.

It is this sad spectacle which pains us. When men and women, our friends, our fellow-Christians, take a stand with these friends and assist the enemy. We can bear it of the world, because in the world we shall have tribulation. But to receive it from God's own people is indeed hard.

TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Suffering.

(Job.)

“Tho He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

Job.

TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Suffering.

Job.

As we turn to the suffering patriarch himself, we are astonished to notice the various moods of his faith. Extremes are here marked. A second thought brings amazement, that the pendulum of faith can swing hither and thither. A deeper reflection, however, upon his condition and times, brings calmer views. Religious experience has no stated equilibrium, not any more than the humidity of the atmosphere, as the experience of God's people manifests. Both day and night are essential elements in our lives. Clouds and rain, as well as sunshine and drought are necessary to fertility. Gold can only be refined thru fire. Hence various elements enter into the make-up of Job's faith. His faith is not always evenly strong; nor equally warm. He has no equilibrium of faith, because he moves in a changeable world and wrestles with imperfections.

Job's faith is not always in an operative mood; his hope is not always a present inspiration; tho his faith never sinks to blasphemy, as Satan had predicted, and his hope is never completely blighted.

Job was pronounced "perfect and upright" by the Almighty. And, still he deals with imperfections and sin. What a paradox; yet not a contradiction. As "perfect", he was in a justified state. He was perfect thru

faith in a promised Messiah. As "upright" he was considered in his daily, sanctified life. It was the result of his being perfect. It refers, therefore, to his sanctification (cf. Van Gelderen, p. 12).

Yet, irrespective of these divine annunciations, Job struggled with sin and sinful men. His case reminds us of what John says: "Whosoever is begotten of God, doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (I John 3:9). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:6). This twofold characteristic of the Christian is also to be borne in mind in considering Job.

Job was perfect in the justification of his Redeemer. He was upright in the sanctification of the regenerated life. In his struggles, he manifests himself as a man yet of this imperfect life. Hence, the successive stages of faith and unbelief, light and darkness, which are marked in his great struggle.

The trials of Job were the counterpart of Satan's charge. Satan had said that they would upset his religion and cause a breach to come between him and his God. The contrary is, however, true. The experience thru which Job passed moulded his character and brought him into a larger vision of life. The sun shines brightest after the storm. Post nubila lux—after the storm light. The darkest moments are succeeded by the greatest light. In his deepest agonies, Job gives birth to the loftiest expressions of faith. It was good for him to be afflicted.

But Job was not always in the skies. How could he be? Was not his pain pressing him on every side and forcing him almost to despair? What burdens he had to carry! What blackness of darkness enveloped his visions! What struggles must even the righteous endure!

What sins arise even around the best, when the veil is unrent! God help His people to hold on their way!

Job was a good man, perfect and upright. But the why and wherefore, of all his sufferings were a mystery to him, as long as he did not see God. Here is a "great soul struggling with the mysteries of its fate" (Davidson). The "scene is not the tumultuous battle-field, nor the arena of rash adventure, but the solitary soul of a righteous man. . . . We are to trace, not the building of a system, but the progress of a character, tried, developed, victorious" (Genung).

The friends see nothing, but the justice of God without His love. They presented a theory which would hold for the ungodly, but it did not touch that of a saint. They can see nothing but punishment; no chastisement. They accuse him, who had already overcome many trials, of sinning; perhaps unwittingly at first, tho later of actual sins. They have five counts against him. The theory of the friends is best understood in its totality; that is, we must take their theory as a whole. Job had met them in argument and sifted out the truth which their theory contained, and laid bare the wrong which it manifested. The friends had found Job too much for their arguments and so keep silence at last. Job, however, could not bring the case beyond refuting the friends. Neither he, nor the friends understood the providence of God relative the righteous, and who can at all times? "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." If He be pleased to contend with man, man cannot answer Him one of a thousand, as Job rightly says (9:3).

And still Job feels that he is not sinless. Nay, he is sinful, even tho he is declared "perfect". His perfection did not mean his sinlessness, but his justified state before his Lord. The struggle thru which he passed, showed that he was human. "There was a leaven of cor-

ruption in his imperfectly sanctified nature, of which he was not aware, until by the terrible thrusts of Satan it was exposed. Underneath his really sincere and fervent piety, there was a taint of self-righteousness which made him smart as he did under the reproaches of his friends and which, in the awful darkness of that mysterious dispensation in which he was enshrouded, led him even to the length of justifying himself rather than God" (Green, p. 55).

Job was circumscribed like the rest of humanity. In his darkness his human nature is best revealed. He is hedged in with limitations. The veil which hid from view the Almighty, he could not always pierce. He had to live by faith, not by sight. Protracted by the pain which harassed his life, he is overcome, and the strong faith which he showed in the first stage (1:21), is commencing to give way to his feelings. For a season, he could endure. Toothache can be borne for a while with fortitude, but when it is prolonged, it irritates. To suffer for a time, can be endured heroically. But when the piles are heaped up, patience is sadly tried. Months, it would seem, he suffered. Even a man of Job's type, failed to stand the full test. How insignificant man is! "What is man that thou art mindful of him" (Ps. 8)? we may well exclaim. Job could praise Jehovah when he stood empty handed and childless. He could then bow to the supreme Will of Jehovah. He confessed then (1:21), that the chief motive of man lies in his Lord, and the greatest tie is that which binds him to his Maker. He had then, so beautifully, adored his Creator. And when he is tempted with the temptation of his wife, who begged him to curse God and die, he had shown an unusual strong faith. But when the rod is not raised, and the suffering becomes more increased with the approach of the friends, and the pain is not stayed, Job gives way

to his feeling. The downward gradation of faith is well marked. First Job stood firm (1:21); then Job sinned not with his lips (2:10); then Job gives way to his passion, and curses the day of his birth (C. 3). The downward gradation of faith is, however, only temporary. It is preliminary to the upward gradation. Humiliation precedes exaltation; the cross the crown.

Hence, as has already been intimated, Job passes thru various stages of faith. Faith is not a well, which keeps the water to the same height all the time. It has different moods and different experiences thru which it passes. Thus also was the experience of Job. Van Gelderen, in his little pamphlet makes a beautiful study of the history of Job's struggle. He studies the psychological process of Job's experience. Green has given a symphonious outline of the temptation which befell the man of Uz (pp. 368, 369).

The experience of Job passes thru six stages, of which the first three have already been considered (1. Faith in prosperity, 1:1-5; 2. Faith in reverses, 1:6-22; 3. Faith in reverses, more severe. 2:1-10). We enter now upon the fourth stage, which I would like to call: Faith in darkness (chapters 3 to 31). The fifth stage (the break of dawn), comes with the Elihu speeches, and the sixth stage (the new day), comes with the Jehovah speeches.

The fourth stage covers the part taken up with the great debate. It runs thru three stages: 1. Job in unrelieved despair; 2. Job rises from despair to hope, and vanquishes the temptation in his second reply to the second friend; 3. Job silences the friends, but the enigma remains (Green, p. 369).

The fourth stage, is the stage of darkness. It is midnight. There are clouds covering the heavens and hiding the stars from view. Only occasionally a star pierces

thru the clouded night, but when one does shine, it shines with unusual splendor.

The first part of the fourth stage, takes in the first cycle of the great debate. Job hurls anathemas at the day of his birth, chides his friends for their insinuations and bewails the stinging taunts of those who once admired him. He upholds his integrity, altho he cannot explain the mystery, which envelopes his mind and baffles his understanding. The good friends, had tried their best to console him and teach him the greatness of God. Their conclusions were in harmony with certain phases of life, but not with all life. The description of Eliphaz's universal goodness of God (Driver), of Bildad's justice of God, of Zophar's wisdom of God, Job maintained as well as his friends. He could even outclass them in recording these divine attributes. In their accusation that God visited him, Job too readily concurred. This is exactly what wounded him; it was his greatest grief. How could He reach Him? The Christian Scientist method would not avail; the Pharisaic righteousness would not do it; O, for a Vindicator (9:33)! But Job sees Him not. Darkness comes over him, as a cloudy night. Baffled on all sides, the stars are even hid from view. Yet, he will not curse God, as Satan has said he would. "Tho he slay me, yet will I wait for Him," is his attitude (13:15). Job was far in advance over his friends. He took exception to their doctrines of retribution, and he does so rightly. The friends would hasten to the grave all those who suffer, but fail to see the purpose, for which their suffering is intended. Job showed convincingly, that calamities befall all men, the just as well as the unjust. Yet, how to explain his suffering in the midst of a suffering world, that was too much for him. Awful darkness covers his vision as he closes chapter 14. He cannot link his suffering to any crime, which

the friends purport, that he must have committed. The idea of innocence saturates his life's thought. He will not plead guilty, come what may. Neither will he abase himself as yet before God in repentance.

In his darkest moments, Job, however, failed. He was too much self-centered. Ever and anon, he falls back upon himself. Turn the compass as you will, the magnet always draws the needle to himself. His friends failed by their condemnatory judgments to raise him up. He, himself was too much self-absorbing to gain the full light of the glory of God. Hence, repeatedly he falls into darkness, and faith seems to sleep. Passionate outbursts, animated by the false conception of the friends and pressed out by the growing idea that God was his enemy, caused clouds of doubt and unbelief to cover his belittled horizon; wicked thoughts to be born in his mind and evil words to be uttered. Only twice in this section, does faith gain any view. All the rest is darkness, pain, suffering. Job has weakened greatly, inwardly. His faith has given way to his feelings.

In the second part of this fourth section (15-21), Job rises from despair to hope. It covers the second cycle of the debate. The problem of pain, is superseded by viewing the situation from the providence of God. The friends had asserted the hasty destruction of the godless. Job had shown it in language, even more convincing. He puts the friends, where they can see that they are wrong, altho they will not be convinced. He shows that sinners do not always receive a just judgment in this life. Nay, they prosper with their possessions and with their children. They live on. Their deserts will, however, be given them, in the world to come. They will appear before the judgment seat of Him with whom we have to do. Then they shall receive their punishment; now they enjoy life; live happily.

As to himself, Job feels, that the earth should not cover up his blood, and allow his case to go down with him into the land of forgetfulness. He hopes against hope, since he is aware that God is a silent listener to the whole event.

Job, likewise shows the friends, that he himself is responsible for his own actions. Individual responsibility, is remarkably developed. But, he is aware that the righteous do not suffer as the evil-doer. There is a distinct difference, tho he cannot state it definitely himself. Yet he is sure that there is a distinction; he knows it exists, even tho he cannot see it now. Hence, hope creeps in and Job comes nigh a solution of the problem, which had vexed his spirit and deprived him of his happy lot. Not man, but God sends these tribulations upon him. If he could have only rested in this God, he might have gained a full view of the situation, as he is later permitted to do.

God and man forsaken, the weary soul often falls into his old trail. Still he does not bury himself in his desolated lot. At last, by divine inspiration, he climbs to the apex of faith, when he sees his Redeemer living, who shall give him his own justification. The beautiful expression of immortality, kindles new hope and brings inspiration such as the friends had never been able to give. Job had come thru all his trials to a better understanding, and in Him sees a new dawn, where all the tears shall be wiped away and in God he shall have his chief delight. "Job's triumphant assertion of his unshaken confidence in God," says Green, "which he reaches near the close of the nineteenth chapter, is deservedly ranked as the most important passage in all his discourses. . . . It exalts the patriarch of Uz to a level with the patriarch of Ur. . . and marks Job as no less conspicuously an example and a pattern of faith than Abraham,—the one as

distinguished and heroic in his constancy in suffering, as the other in his unswerving obedience" (p. 181).

In the third part of the fourth stage, Job puts his friends to silence, but the question remains unsolved. Eliphaz dares to accuse him of five different sins which he must have committed. Bildad can only utter a few verses about the inferiority of man to the great God and Zophar has nothing more to add.

The debate brings the friends face to face with defeat. They have lost out as Satan had, in the first and second stages. They have failed to console; they have failed to give proper treatment to him who sought it so dearly, as if with his own blood. They have misinterpreted the divine government. The secondary tools of Satan had widened the breach and increased the misery. Job had put his friends to silence, tho his strength had wasted by disease. But he had not been able to silence his conscience, as the second monologue clearly shows (27-31).

But how to explain the mystery which had come upon him, was beyond his comprehension. He suffered, yet knew not how to adjust it to the divine economy. "It is in his debate with God, that the interest of Job's speeches is most intense. He charges God sometimes in language of tremendous realism, with inflicting his intolerable pains. His are the poisoned arrows that have consumed his strength. It is God who assails him like a giant, and dashes him to pieces" (Peake, *Problem of Suffering in the O. T.*, p. 89). Job was afflicted by a heavy hand; this he knew; it was the hand of God. In that hour, what could he do? To whom, can he go? In those moments, when the heavens seem closed to him, and the earth his enemy, his soul aspires to that lofty conception, akin to the Christian religion, and the very foundation-concept of Christianity. He longs for a Medi-

ator, or Adjuster. Job, that man of faith, fights against every assault, and maintains his integrity. He desires a vindication, if not on earth, then in the world to come. Swept almost to despair; grieved at the action of his friends; "maddened by his pain"; perplexed at the providential and moral order of the universe; the suffering patriarch proclaims boldly his integrity, without solving the mystery. Master of masters, as he may have been; power of powers, which he may have once displayed; riddle of riddles, which he once may have solved; he stands now masterless, powerless, helpless. He leaves us, as we see him, without raising the clouds, and bringing the sunlight. "Job himself," says Davidson, "offers no positive contribution to the doctrine of evil. His position is negative and mere antagonistic to that of the friends. But this negative position, victoriously maintained by him, has the effect of clearing the ground, where he communicates the real explanation of his hero's calamities, and teaches that they were a trial of his righteousness" (Theol. O. T., p. 470).

Altho the riddle is unsolved, still the action of faith becomes more prominent, as the discussion proceeds. Like a stream, the struggles of Job appear. When the sources are low, he can see nothing but the miry bottom of his afflictions; when the spring-tide of faith flows, the banks are over-flooded and he is buried in his God, and God is all in all to him. At times he loses; at times he wins. Yet he ends, as he begins. The mystery he cannot solve; he does not solve. Like a subterranean stream, however, his faith remains thru all his windings. With all the perplexities which surround him; with all that has been heard and said; with all the available powers in man, the veil had not been rent, the light does not pierce thru, the situation had not been altered. A desperately inclement night befell him. But he is not left

without a witness. He must learn the great lesson, that man must believe when he cannot see. Faith is the victory which overcomes the world. Job is baffled, yet he believes.

The fifth and sixth stages follow in their chronological order in the following chapters. Briefly stated, they are as follows:

The fifth stage of Job's faith, is the break of dawn, so to say. Job is silent; Elihu speaks. Job is touched, but does as yet not master the situation, tho he is astir with buoyant hope. The day of full hope feebly glimmers. The morning light is breaking. The divine order is defined and vindicated. Sinners are punished; saints are perfected, thru suffering. The way of the former leads to death; of the latter, to life. God's anger hovers over the one; His love over the other. Saints are being trained thru afflictions for advanced standing. God loves Job, and wishes to bring him into fuller light.

The sixth stage of Job's faith, is the new day. Nothing less than the imposing presence of the Eternal, will bring the full light. Conform His greatness, God appears in a storm. Power and benevolence, are displayed on all sides. Might and love are universally marked. Job could well have said: "It is too wonderful for me." Yet he must surrender; he must, yea he does repent. And, O, the goodness and mercy which follow him all the days of his life!

Blessed are they that hold on their way in faith! Happy, are they who strive on amid all the reverses of this life! The experience of Job shows, that Christians should never become laggard and heartless. They must persevere unto the end, and understand, that out of many trials and tribulations they must enter into the Kingdom of God.

THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Chastisement.

(Elihu.)

“My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reproved of him;
For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

Hebrews 12: 5b, 6.

THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Chastisement.

(Elihu.)

Neither Job nor his friends had been able to decipher the riddle of life, and the providential rule of God over the righteous. The friends had advanced the idea that all suffering was penal. Job suffered because he had sinned. Job, on the contrary, had refuted such a theory as incompatible with facts, claiming at the same time that God arbitrarily visited him. Job had won the debate with the friends, but he had failed to explain the mysteries which surrounded his life. It remained for Elihu to open the way for a better understanding of the situation and to start to unravel the mystery, which would ultimately be the method by which Job could obtain peace and understand the secret of life.

Taking issue with neither the friends, nor with Job, the youthful Elihu asks permission to speak. The basis for doing so was the fact that Job and his friends were both silent, neither having explained the difficulty. Tho age and tradition were against him, yet he ventures to speak, because he believes that the motives which prompt him, justify his actions. Job's behavior had kindled his wrath; the attitude of the friends had kindled his spirit. Neither Job, nor the friends had made a case. Both had failed. Job had vindicated himself rather than God; the friends had sacrificed Job to their antiquated theory and passed a verdict wholly unwarranted. Con-

scious of breaking a sacred custom, honored by time. Elihu apologizes for speaking. A grieved spirit, as was that of Elihu, must disregard conventionality, even to the extent of trespassing one of the most sanctimonious heritages of the unwritten law.

Timidly, Elihu opens his speeches; boldly he closes. Confusedly he begins; systematically and philosophically he correlates his ideas toward the close. Cheyne thinks that Elihu "sought to undo the work of his predecessors by restating a theory, which had not, he thought been adequately represented before" (Ency. Bib. Art. Job). He offers no new solution, so Davidson thinks, but some arguments which the friends have overlooked. Be this as it may, it cannot be gainsaid, Elihu opens the way for a true aspect of the providence of God and the suffering of his people, which had not been hitherto explained by either Job, or his friends. Job had come nigh it. Job knew he had to deal with God in order to understand the situation. Job had longed for an interview with God. Around the sovereignty of God the problem was to meet a solution.

Before his attack upon Job, Elihu promises not to terrify him. Moved only upon the principle of right, he proceeds; swayed only by the sacred trust imparted to him by the Almighty, he speaks; barring eulogistic terms and flattery expressions of which Eliphaz had made use in his first discourse (C. 4), he opens his address, promising neither to be bias nor partial in his utterances.

In opposition to the position of Job, that God inflicted suffering, Elihu maintains the goodness and kindness of God in nature. In opposition to the theory of the friends, who had said that suffering was penal, Elihu shows that it is corrective.

The bulwark which Job had built around his character and integrity, is made the object of assault. The suf-

ferer had maintained his innocence and defends his integrity against all hazards of life. Elihu lays low his stronghold. The sovereignty of God was his armory; the superior greatness of God his ammunition; the revelation of God, his source of information.

Job had sinned, during the course of the debate. The incompatibleness of suffering of the righteous with the government of a just God, was his chief source of trouble. He had attacked the divine order of the universe and maintained that the moral order of the universe had been inverted. Job left the riddle unread, the mystery unexplained, the solution unsolved.

Many think, that Elihu falls a victim, to the theory which he tries to refute. His ideas do run somewhat parallel with those of Eliphaz's first address, but in their last analysis and in conjunction with the other part of the address, it is clear that there is a remarkable distinction. Eliphaz wants suffering to mean a manifesto of sinfulness. Elihu explains it by saying, that these things befall the righteous for disciplinary ends. The upright suffer for their own good.

The friends, Job and Elihu, all alike, believe in the absolute sovereignty of God. Job and the friends had admitted it in lofty figures of speech, and in exalted terms they had declared it. **But it remained for Elihu to bring it to working basis.** Elihu applies the sovereignty concept to actual life, and explains its intent.

Job was especially smitten with this subject. He had complained that "God had taken away his right". Elihu shows the error of Job's assertion, and makes his case so clear, that, altho he allows Job to answer him and gives him ample time to do so, he cannot reply.

God's inherent character forbids injustice.. His nature demands His own uprightness. His handiwork and providence display His goodness, otherwise man would

perish from the earth. His moral perfection is seen in the moral perfection of the universe, for justice is the foundation stone of government. As omniscient, God takes cognizance of men's deeds, and as Ruler, He brings punishment to the wicked, as a warning to good men. Here then, is benevolence and kindness as well as justice in God, which neither Job nor his friends had been able to see.

Before the bar of this God of justice and mercy, of proper government and omniscience, Elihu calls Job to account. Standing in the undimmed presence of the absolute Monarch, Job stands condemned, since he will not confess his wrong.

In the sovereignty concept, Elihu brought the suffering man of Uz to realize that he had said much against God and done things unbecoming him. Job's behavior over against God had been sinful. This is the crucial point, which he makes, and in which finally Job himself shares, when he repents of his sins, before Jehovah. Job is led to see that he has gone beyond his rights. He has misjudged God and sinned against His greatness. His rebellion must be stayed; his course changed; his sins confessed. Submission, confession and rejoicing in salvation is the blessed trio urged upon Job.

Job had declared that religion was of no profit, since God acted arbitrarily against him. Religion would not save a person immune from affliction. Elihu answers that the fault lies with man, not with God, for religion is indeed profitable unto all things. It is of benefit not to God, but to man.

The realization of the blessings of religion, Job had failed to grasp. Why is it that Job had received no answer to his groanings and sighs? Why had he not been heard when he called for help? Why was heaven shut to him, when he had pleaded with God? O, says

Elihu, upon the motive of prayer hinges the blessing. If a man cries merely for relief, what a selfish motive prompts his prayer! If a man cries solely to reduce his pains and agonies, how carnal is that principle! That hit Job hard. The pressure had prompted his pleadings. His pains had driven him to cry for help. But how much religion was there in such a prayer? Job had not the warning which is given man by the mouth of the apostle James: "Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it, in your pleasures" (Jas. 4:3).

The motive of prayer must be beyond self. It should consist in praise and service, in worship and adoration. Then God would open His store-house and answer. This had not been the motive-principle of Job's prayers, during the debate. When it was, as in the prologue Job had peace and was at rest. But, during the progress of the debate Job had placed his own interests before the divine. Hence at Elihu's rebukes, Job stood mute. He could not reply to his words. The truth was too apparent; the lesson, learnt.

Manifesting the wisdom and power of God, Elihu lays stress upon proper conduct. Man's deeds and thoughts and words, are weighed. If these are not of the proper type, he stands self-condemned. His works condemn him. Therefore Job knows no way out. He holds his silence.

As to the sufferings, which came to Job, Elihu maintains, these had been sent for a good purpose. God wishes to lead Job into a higher manifestation of Himself. The Almighty has a purpose in view, when He afflicts His children. God has a good end in view. Job has stubbornly refused to walk in the higher paths of life. His interests have been selfish.

Hence, the warning trumpet is sounded. God sends affliction to call men back to Him. The surrender before

the majestic power and heavenly array of the Eternal is urged. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Job must learn the lesson. Chastisement is evidently the purpose which God has in view to thus afflict Job. "For whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth." "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together for good, even to them that are called to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Will Job see this new interpretation of God's rule? How can he resist, as the flashes of lightning and the pealing of thunder surround him? The whole heaven is aglow with His majesty; can Job answer Him? Can he answer Elihu? He cannot. He does not. God is too wonderful for him; too much for him. Will he repent? Will he return abasing himself and confessing his wrong? It was a hard path to travel for one who boasted his self-righteousness, altho not directly. Job was already outwardly abased. He had stood much suffering. One more thing was needed—absolute surrender to the God of all. Surrender was the vanguard; confession his safeguard; repentance his homeguard.

Hence, the theory of Elihu is, that "God sends calamities to good men by way of chastisement, not of punishment; in love, not in anger, to purify and strengthen them, to purge out faults, to save from the pit, to purify and enlighten them" (Pulpit Comm.). "Suffering is intended to exercise an education and purifying influence, and the wise man will not recklessly rebel or fretfully chafe against it" (Davidson, *Hast. B. D.*). Suffering is penal for the wicked; suffering is educational, a training, a discipline for God's people. Job is to be "perfected thru suffering."

Elihu, indeed, paves the way for the final solution. His conception of sovereignty and chastisement are the two elements in which Job finds rest. Job has been pre-

pared for the final stage, and when it comes, he changes. The argument of Elihu and the scene of the storm, pave the way to conquer Job.

Elihu had claimed to be the divine representative. His message shows that he was. Human wisdom stood mute at the great problem of suffering. The friends, the philosophers were not able to bring a proper solution. Job was too much self-centered to see the goodness of God. It is only by God Himself, speaking by Elihu His prophet, that the mystery is being solved. The friends aided the assault upon Job. They need correction and atonement (C. 42). But Elihu, having spoken for God needs no atonement, or correction. Job saw the truthfulness of Elihu's words. He makes no reply. Elihu had fulfilled a great mission.

Happy are they, who will follow the divine way, rather than follow some ancient creed; blessed are they, who prepare God's people for greater service; blessed are they, yea, thrice blessed, who can thus lead the afflicted people of God to quietness and rest. Elihu, the man of God, young as he was, breaking away as he did with past customs and theories, became the great John the Baptist. He paved the way for the coming of Jehovah. The world is in need of such men to-day, men who prepare the way for His coming.

What a comfort to God's people, to know that a Father's hand rules their lives and shapes their destiny. The love of the Father's heart for His child is the greatest thought mortal man may cherish. He who holds the reins will not suffer that one of His least should perish, nor any of the great.

FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Surrender.

(Jehovah).

“Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.”

Samuel.

FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Surrender.

Jehovah.

We now turn to the so-called "Jehovah speeches." It is cast in beautiful language as we might expect, since Jehovah speaks. Peake has called it: "A sustained effort of the highest genius, unsurpassed in the world's literature" (Job, p. 43). And Driver has said: "The first speech of Jehovah transcends all other descriptions of the wonders of creation or the greatness of the Creator, which are to be found in the Bible, or elsewhere" (p. 427). It certainly is the climax of the poem. It is a grand display of the creative and providential acts of the Almighty. Nine illustrations are drawn from the natural phenomena; ten cases from the animal world; two from the giant sea-monsters.

The relative value of this section, is variously estimated. J. M. P. Smith sees nothing more in it, than a grand display of the power and wisdom of God. Peake says that these speeches exercise the tender care of God. To me, it offers a grand conception of a world and life view, which centers in the eternal, allpowerful God, our Father who is in heaven.

It is well to note that the term Jehovah appears rather prominently in this section. Thruout the Book of Job, the name seldom occurs, except here where it is

rather conspicuous. Formerly a distant, unapproachable God was presented, now a loving Father, the Lord of His people, who exercises good-will and kindness. He is Jehovah, the covenant God, who here speaks. Hitherto, Job had failed to see the benevolence and goodness of God; now he sees nothing but goodness, speaking thru power.

This interview with God Job had long cherished. He desired to meet God face to face; he thought he would then understand and be vindicated. The privilege is now granted him, tho different from what he had anticipated. Out of the whirlwind Jehovah speaks. In the storm He comes. Job finds out that man's thoughts are different from those of the divine. Let Job now speak, as he had desired. But Job has changed, as we shall presently see.

The course pursued, is the unexpected; or rather the expected, since God's ways are not our ways. It is, therefore, perfectly justifiable. There is no direct allusion to Job's suffering. There is no direct lifting of the heavy hand. There is no direct promise of restoration. We look in vain for a direct answer to the question involved, altho it is plainly shown. We search fruitlessly for words of comfort, tho comfort is clearly given. We scrutinize hopelessly for a justification of Job's vindication of his innocence.

On the contrary, hope comes thru other channels. Actions speak louder than words. God is greater than man. Job had shown that there was a disinterested goodness (see prologue). He had shown Satan as the great deceiver and liar. But for him, the question was: "Why did God send this evil upon me?" He had to drink a bitter cup, which poisoned his intellect and led him to do injustice to the character of God. Job now already feels, how true the theory of Elihu was, that God corrects his people, and the whole outcome is, that Job hastens to correct himself. While forced to submit, he could not

willingly submit himself to the will of God at once, for he had misread the signs and the nature of the providence of God. Hence the wonderful display of infinite kindness and power. It brought Job beyond his shrunken horizon. Job must stand corrected before he can think of relief. He must come to see his wrong, before he can be relieved from pain. He must come to see his sins, rather than enjoy bliss. The way to Mt. Olives lies also for Job in the way of Golgotha. He must be humiliated before he can be exalted. It was most fitting, that Job should believe and then see his restoration. It was most becoming, that he should stand self-condemned, rather than be condemned by God. It was of great import for the life of the pious man, that his life should terminate as it does. Job, and consequently all those who are called upon to suffer, must come to see that God is good and kind. If the Almighty Father wills to clothe the lilies majestically, and feed the insignificant ravens plentifully, how much more will He you, O ye of little faith!

Instead of coming in a breeze, Jehovah comes in a storm. Job was beyond the reach of human intellect. The words of the friends had hardened his heart in an indirect way and paved the way for a greater rebellion against the moral Governor of the universe. Elihu had given a divine message, but Job would as yet not submit to it, altho he silently concurs to its contents. How befitting, therefore, that Jehovah, the Father of love, should speak, and show the real issue of all. And as He comes, He simply puts Job to shame with the powerful display of His goodness and might over the wild forces and uncared for animals, thereby showing that He has no need to defend His ways before man. God needs not give account to man of the "why" or "wherefore" of His ways. It is enough for man, that he knows that there is a Father's heart back of all, who careth for him.

God stands accountable to none. He is supreme Ruler, and His rule is just and kind.

Hence, a new world view opens up to Job. He sees a greater love and a greater light, and into His spirit he can commit his ways. But Job does not see, until he is taken thru various forms of animate and inanimate things, given and governed by God.

The train of thought passes from one concept to another; like moving pictures, one scene succeeds another. Where was Job when the corners of the earth were measured and its foundations sunk, when the celestial choir sang anthems of praise and adoration? Who walled the deep and bridged the span? Had Job part in conquering darkness by the break of day, which acts as a moral agent to uproot the dens of wicked men? What knowledge has he of the nether-world, with its dark chambers and cold grip of death? Did he have a share in setting boundaries to darkness and light? Was he ever where His ministers of justice are stored away—"hail" and "snow"? Can he elucidate the wedged rocks and deep ravines, the way of lightning, rain and fertility? Has he access to the powers over the constellations and clouds? What can he answer to all these questions? He is without a positive answer. What a mighty Creator who brings, and a loving Father who holds all things by the word of His power!

Now, turning to the animate beings, who gives food to the roaming lion, the lowly raven, the wild goats and hinds, the wild ass and ox, the loveless ostrich and the snorting war-horse, the instinct of the hawk and eagle? Job? Let him answer. God demands it; He wills a reply. Job's self-defense is shattered; he is changed; converted; sees new visions: but fails to repent, tho he exclaims: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee" (A. V.)?

Not yet completely surrendered, Job is shown God's moral order. Can he control such powers over the world and man? If so, God will vindicate him and he will be divinely exonerated. Then the two sea-monsters—"behemoth" and "leviathan" are shown, with such a powerful description that Job comes to see greater visions and dream greater dreams. If he has no control over man, nor over evil forces, how much less has he over Him, who holds the sea-monsters in restraint?

The theophany had its desired results. Not only is God justified in all His ways, but Job is also reclaimed. The visions had become an eye-opener to him. Penitently he returns, and is restored.

The Jehovah speeches, therefore, are determining factors in the discussion. Jehovah has been justified in all His ways. Job has been rescued from his own self-centered concentration. What no words could do, Jehovah's appearance does. And Job, without promise of relief, without any hope of better days, without alleviation of pain, nevertheless finds rest for his weary soul. In that momental revelation of the awful majesty of God and of those visions of His glory and power and love, Job humbles himself. He sees God, as He is, not as man claims Him to be.

The coming of Jehovah brought peace to the afflicted patriarch. Deism is here put aside; Theism is a wonderful fact. The truth of Elihu's speech dawns more and more upon Job. God is immanent, as well as transcendent. God moves in the world in which we live. In Him we move and live and have our being. Blind fate, can claim no place in Job's system. The goodness of God is thereby magnificently revealed. If these animate and inanimate things are objects of God's special care, then Job may believe, that He also cares for him.

The first speech, sends home the truth, that God who upholds His creative acts, also rules Job's life. This great loving Father is not in need of Job, but Job is in need of Him. Hence, He is independently exalted above responsibility to man and need not give account of His deeds to man. It is enough for man to know, that He is good and great; hence, He is to be served and worshipped.

Job, therefore, bows before the metaphysical exaltation of Jehovah. But he must also bow before His moral perfections, otherwise his humiliation would only be temporal (Van Gelderen, p. 65). This fact becomes known in the "second-Jehovah-speech". Also to this Job must acquiesce. And this, he does.

The appearance of Jehovah blasted Job's self-defence. The riven side gave birth to new thoughts and different ways. It brought him to himself. A new and substantial world and life view is given him. The absolute sovereignty of God captivates him, and he, prostrates himself before the divine mercy-seat. He confesses that he had spoken words without understanding; yea, as he himself says: "Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."

Without the slightest intimation of ever being restored, Job submits to Jehovah. Rewards and merits, which once played an important role, are now laid aside, and higher judgment values are introduced to settle the all-important question. Every selfish motive now vanishes from view. Not man, but God becomes uppermost to Job. Seeing Jehovah, convinces him that the worship of God is in itself the chief duty of man, and unconditional surrender is the only hope for him and the only way open to enter into a treaty with God.

This new view, gives courage to the afflicted man of Uz. The moral perfections of God overwhelm him with

awe, and in the divine mercy, his soul rests in hope. His assumptions of the character of God and the destiny of man, were found wanting in the higher regime which had been shown him. His belittled horizon had become a world-view in the new revelation. His principles had been put upon better basis. In his narrower vision, he had been unable to see the full truth of the sovereignty of God and man's place in His world; but now, with new visions, brought about thru personal contact of the finite with the Infinite, he sees a greater world, and the greatest Sovereign, and in Him his soul finds peace.

Thru this higher conception of God, Job obtained a new understanding of life. He is no more the self-righteous man, so to say, fighting as it were with the last drop of blood for his integrity and defying God and accusing Him of injustice; nay, he is now the humiliated Job, who debases and abhors himself on account of the wrong which he has committed. He lies trembling like a Saul of Tarsus, before the throne of grace, seeking mercy. Hitherto, his sufferings had debased him; now, he is debased on account of his sins. Hitherto, he had surrendered only because he could do no other way; now, he does so willingly. He now repents of the evil words and wicked deeds, of which he found himself guilty. He had won, won the battle at last; not, however, with words or deeds, but by humble surrender to the majesty of the God of mercy. He won, not by following his own ways, but by accepting God's ways.

Altho no terror has been removed; no alleviation of suffering, even suggested; no promise of the removal of pain, given; no change in his present condition, offered: these were never broached—never alluded to, yet he surrenders. These were not the vital things. "Get right with God," was the first and foremost question. The vision of God brought him to this conception. It had

taken him out of his self-centered horizon, into the all-prevailing Spirit of God. In this vision, all questions which had hitherto occupied his mind and vexed his spirit take wings, and the will of God becomes the ruling factor in his life. He now becomes a type of Him, who in His deepest agonies taught the world to pray: "Thy will be done," and Job already enacts in deeds, what the Master later taught his followers to pray: "Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth." Truly the divine grace was accorded the man of Uz in a large measure.

Saturated with the divine mercy, the impregnable citadel of Job's integrity crumbled and the citadel of the sovereign Lord reared, and Job enters it and is restored. Jehovah turned his captivity, when he intercedes for his friends, and He blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. This superiority of his life after his affliction consisted not only in material prosperity and domestic happiness and social elevation, but especially in the fact that Job's faith was better rooted and firmer fixed, and his hope was more clearly possessed. Job had been rescued from his self-esteem, and the divine estimation is at last Job's motive of life and the principle which he upholds with all power.

Being saved from death, Job may see prosperity wink at him on every side. Surely, goodness and mercy follow the upright! Blessed are all they who will acknowledge the changing principle in Job's life. The sovereignty of God must permeate the whole course of life, and the outcome of every action, and every motive must be: *solī Deo gloria*.

FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Suffering and Divine Sovereignty.

(The whole Book of Job).

“O Lord my God, be Thou not far from me; my God, have regard to help me; for there have risen up against me sundry thoughts and great fears, afflicting my soul. How shall I pass thru unhurt? How shall I break them in pieces? This is my hope, my one only consolation, to flee unto Thee, in every tribulation, to trust in Thee, to call upon Thee from my inmost heart, and wait patiently for Thy consolation. Amen.”

Thomas A Kempis.

FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Human Suffering and Divine Sovereignty.

The Book of Job.

The Book of Job is a unit. It must be considered in toto. In its integrity its message is to be found. It is like a body. It has many members, tho all are united together, notwithstanding the functional propriety of each part. The Book of Job could not be sectionally interpreted. We would be at sea, if e. g. the prologue were missing; or, if the debate contained only the speeches of Job; or, in fact, if any part were eliminated. The negative and positive, the satanic and divine, the prologue and epilogue, the human and the prophetic are elements essential to build the substantial, unalterable solution of the fundamental issues of life.

Taken in toto, the Book of Job has the sovereignty concept as its formative principle. It is the deep underlying thought, the foundation-idea, the base-structure, the eternal truth. The material as well as the spiritual, the satanic as well as the human world are under His supervision. Dependency is universal, except divine. Inherent power is a misnomer; independent action is a relative term; self-determination is a farce. First and last, God only is; He is free, independent, the great determining factor.

Sovereignty stands beyond all suffering and aloof every spiritual fiend. God stands supreme, before whom every knee bows, both of friend and foe.

The sovereignty concept predominates in its last analysis, all classes of forces, evil not excluded. The Satan, the giant foe, seeks control and determines his coronation, yet only with complete failure and exposure of meanness and deceitfulness and wretchedness. He, too, is all but free. He is circumscribed, subject to the divine rule, controlled by the higher Hand. If God were not King, Satan would soon invert the moral order of the world, and pervert the ways of the righteous. But he is not ultimate, not final. He can never be considered first and last, the alpha and omega. He is and must be inferior, held in harness, bound, not free. Therefore, God's people may confidently trust their sovereign Lord, who saves to the uttermost.

The sovereignty concept, gives birth to the power of evil. The Satan, evil's representative, is made known. Men must know him and his destructive mission, in order to understand the suffering of the righteous. His devices are wicked to the limit. Murder and torture are his delight. He subtly seeks the downfall of the righteous, and tries to brand them hypocrites. But for the sovereign God Job would have failed, failed miserably, and Satan would have triumphed, triumphed mightily. But Satan can perform his task no more than Sisyphus could roll that huge stone upon the high hill, which always rolled to the bottom. The Lord puts facts above fancy, truth above lies. Satan's theory is smashed to atoms, his terrible lies publicly exposed, his deceptive character truthfully unmasked, that man should no longer put credence to his theory, and that he should guard against his falsehoods by trusting in the eternal rock, God's protectorate.

The sovereignty-concept is supreme. There may be tears, nevertheless the saint can worship. There may be pain, but it cannot withhold from glorification. The

giant sufferer worshipped when his heart was stricken with grief over his heavy losses. The man of Uz reared his altar when in the very battle of life, and offered his incense when the disease was gnawing his very breath. And finally, when harassed on all sides, baffled by Satan, he stood with his God. When his wife tempts him to give up, curse God and die, when Satan haunted him like a lion its prey, when his friends stung the vital union of God's people, when Elihu captured the warring mind, when pain drew out the sap of life, when Jehovah overwhelms him with His goodness, Job can do but one thing, but he does it majestically. He worships. His devotion is more true, his motive more pure, than hitherto. He worships with no incentive other than that God is God. A suffering saint may never count the battle lost. He may never hopelessly give up. The true worship must stand, ever and anon, undefiled. It must stand even if man's very constitution fails. It must be executed even tho the night is dark, and the veil unrent. Courage must always remain. Where sight is impossible, faith must be king. The service of God demands the uppermost place, and towers above every material remuneration. The union to God must be perfected, to which expression must be made when all others sever. Disinterested goodness exposes Satan's falsehood, and carries the divine stamp of saintship. The service of God is uppermost, the divine sovereignty supreme. As long as men do not follow the injunction of the Master to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, so long has the sovereignty-concept not yet reached its proper place in the hearts of men, so long men will be hopelessly groping in the dark.

The keener the suffering, the greater the strife, the heavier the battle, the mightier the affray, the purer the motive, the truer the revelation. Job was at his best

when he was buried the deepest. The triumphs of faith pierced thru the blackest assault, and the Light of the world shone in the darkest hours. God led His servant thru his trials. He was his stay and staff. That is the secret—the whole secret. Dependent upon God, God was to him a refuge and a present help in trouble. The expression of redemption thru the mediation of a Mediator culminating in immortality, were born like Aphrodite, in severe pangs. Not by the enchanted cup of Circe were these brought about, but by God's divine Spirit. The idea of Mediator fostered reconciliation, and reconciliation cherished immortality, eternal union with a pacified God—the two grandest conceptions any mortal can enjoy. On account of these utterances a monument has been erected far greater than the pyramids of Gizeh, which, gigantic as they are among the seven wonders of the world, are crumbling, whereas Job's faith is re-born in all God's people by the living Spirit, and the triumph of faith is the realization of hope in the blessed immortal union to God, effected thru reconciliation and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The theology of the friends, did an injustice to the sovereignty concept. Eagerly they fought for it, but they fought wrongly, since their theory was based upon a false conception of the divine government and a misrepresentation of the divine Kingship. Truth and error are jointly mixed, and defended for righteousness. The vulnerability of their theory is easily accomplished with the aid of Elihu. Suffering and sin are primarily united. For suffering and sinfulness go hand in hand with a person unregenerated. Hence their theology is a truth only half stated. The sinner deserves punishment. But this was never a question of dispute. This is one aspect of sin; it is penal. Yet to make this universally applicable to both godly and ungodly, is misconstruing the love of

God. Rightly, therefore, God calls the friends to task; they must make amendment.

There is a suffering other than for sin. There is a suffering which God's people are called upon to endure. This is the problem of Job. This is the solution which Elihu, God's prophet, gives. Such suffering is not penal, but disciplinary; not punishment, but chastisement. God guides His people, of which Job is a representative, thru many ways and untrodden paths, to equip them for the heavenly mansions. It is a training in God's school for higher duties, and for nobler ends. It not only tests saintship, but develops it too. The Father must often use the rod to correct and train His children, since they are prone to wander. The wicked world frequently oppresses; the sinful nature often disdains God; Satan often tempts. Hence, the higher Rule, the better government to lead into greater devotion. Job stood nearer heaven at the end of his trials than at the beginning of them. The trials were hard for him, but they were a great blessing just the same. Elihu cut the Gordian knot with the sword of the Spirit. God's suffering people may now understand that their Lord loves them, who smites to heal, wounds to correct.

In this life of intense suffering, which also the Master entered, the sovereign-concept gives grace. This gave Job courage to cry out: "Yet shall the righteous hold on his way" (Job 17:9). The child of specific grace cannot give up, may not give up. "And whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world" (I John 5:4). Satan has unjustly maintained the overthrow of the righteous; Job has justly shown the reverse. The saints are engraved in the palm of the Eternal, and no one can snatch them out of His hand. If, this suffering comes for a good intent and is the revelation of love as the Elihu and Jehovah speeches clearly show, then it may be well to ask: "Who

shall separate us from the love of God?" With Paul, it may be said: "In all these things, we are more than conquerors, thru Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8: 37, 38).

Hence, it is evident that God is not in need of man; man, however, is in need of God. Man's whole life is enveloped in the divine. God's sovereignty reaches the lilies and the ravens, and man. Before Him every knee should bow and every tongue, confess. Man redeemed should understand his position in the world. God gives no account of His deeds; on the contrary, man is accountable to God. The refuge for a clear conscience and peace of soul should be sought in Him, who says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). Leaving his argument of personal integrity, Job seeks refuge under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty, and his soul rests in peace.

Hence, the mists roll away. The mystery of suffering accompanying the righteous, finds the true solution in the sovereignty of God, which is a reign of love and power for God's people. After all, the Book of Job is **primarily concerned with the doctrine of God**. It is, therefore, essential that the sovereignty concept be upheld, even tho men like Froude (Essays, Vol. I, pp. 241, 249) ridicule it. It is necessary to form a world and life view which centers in Him and radiates from Him, otherwise Job cannot be understood. God cares especially for the welfare of His people. He moulds their character; strengthens their faith; disciplines their nature; masters their passion; shapes their destiny. He only is their God; they are the sheep of His pasture (Ps. 100: 3).

The vision of God's sovereignty conquered Job. His belittled horizon gave way to a world and life view found in Him, who was and is and ever more shall be, blessed forever. Job now forgets his sorrow and God becomes the sole object of reflection. The vision brought the self-centered sufferer to look at the wide universe, and get a juster estimate of man's place in the world. God took him out of himself, and led him to Him, and in this vision he was released of his problem. He saw God and entered into rest (Peake, Prob. of Suffering in the O. T., p. 100).

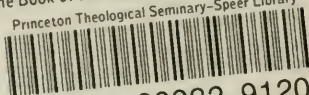
The message of the patriarchal age has not yet been outgrown. It is a message for the twentieth century. **The adorable sovereignty of God, the main spring of Calvinism, is the savor of the world, in every age.** In such a world view, all sufferers can find peace and rest; as they wrestle with this momentous problem, they should come to a proper understanding of their Father who is in heaven, who wills not that one sparrow should fall without His will; who takes account of His people, and numbers the very hairs on their head (Mt. 10:29-31). May they lay aside all argument, all murmurings, as Job ultimately did, and in the greatest of all Beings, the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, find rest, knowing that God is supreme and His will is perfect. Where all arguments failed, the presence of God brought the rebellious heart to surrender, the sinful heart to confess, the disquieted heart to peace. "As we dwell in the secret of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty, we see the universe from a new view point. Since we know God we can trust Him to the uttermost." Like the actions of the pacified man of Uz, one may well say: In te, Domine, speravi (In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust).

THE END.

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